

New Justice Velasco vows to speed up 'turtle in crutches'

Donors tell RP: Curb corruption; gov't must ensure benefits reach people

Freed US journalist praised rebels, predicted their victory before release

PCGG willing to start compromise talks with Marcoses

Nora Aunor pleads guilty to drug rap, skips jail term

By Janet Susan R. Nepales
Contributor

LOS ANGELES—FILIPINO SUPERSTAR NORA Aunor pleaded guilty to drug possession, but escaped jail after agreeing to enter a new drug rehabilitation program, a court official said. Aunor, 52, was arrested a year ago after security screeners at Los Angeles International Airport

NORA/A6

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Come home now 'na,' DFA tells Filipino illegals in US

By Nikko Dizon

COME HOME NOW NA. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) has advised Filipino TNIs or tago ng tago (in hiding) in the United States to come home as the battle over a

COME/A6



Cha-cha now in Comelec

Manila submits signatures as poll execs told to verify forms ASAP

By Tina G. Santos,
Carla P. Gomez
and TJ Burgenio

AS THOUGH IN RESPONSE to President Macapagal-Arroyo's endorsement of a people's initiative to amend the Constitution, the Manila government has asked the Commission on Elections to verify 155,123 signatures it said it had gathered from the city's six districts.

Mayor Lito Atienza turned over the signature forms to the city's Comelec officers during simple rites at the City Hall yesterday morning. He said the local government had gathered 16 percent of Manila's total registered voters.

"We got overwhelming support from the people. We even exceeded the required 12 percent of the total registered voters and 3 percent in each legislative district," Atienza said.

"We request that verification by the local Comelec against official records be conducted to as-



COUNTER-SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN at the MRT Station in Quezon City by militant groups dubbed People's Movement Against Arroyo's Charter Change (People's March) may be too little, too late to stop the apparently gov't-fueled, onrushing Cha-cha train on its tracks.

certain the authenticity of the signatures," he said.

In Bacolod City, Commissioner Resurreccion Borra yesterday said he had sent a directive to all regional directors of the Comelec to begin the verification of signatures as soon as possible.

Borra told the INQUIRER that the verification would not violate the Supreme Court ruling in March 1997 on the case of Santiago vs Comelec. In fact, he said, it was in keeping with the activities allowed by the ruling.

According to Borra, the ruling

allowed the Comelec to conduct four activities: prepare the forms for the people's initiative, provide the statistics needed for the process, establish signing stations, and verify the signatures of voters who signed the petition.

The signatures that the Comelec will certify as authentic will then be attached to the initiative to amend the Constitution that will be filed with the Comelec, Borra said.

The Comelec will then rule on whether to allow a plebiscite or

CHA-CHA/A4



TOP OF THE LINE. Mayor Lito Atienza receives from barangay officials of the 6th Legislative District the filled-up signature forms to change the government from presidential to parliamentary. Atienza is first to submit the accomplished forms to the Comelec, a total of 155,123 signatures or 16 percent of Manila's registered voters which exceeds the required 12 percent.

Senators warn: Runaway train headed for cliff, legal obstacles

By TJ Burgenio

IT IS A RUNAWAY TRAIN HEADED for the cliff, and it's time now for its passengers to jump off before it crashes, two senators op-

posed to the Malacañang-blessed campaign to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative warned yesterday.

Maverick administration Sen. Joker Arroyo and Senate Minor-

ity Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. rejected Palace claims that the so-called "Cha-cha train" was unstoppable and would crush those who sought to stop it.

SENATORS/A8

3 Filipinos among 57 drowned in Bahrain

MANAMA, BAHRAIN—AT LEAST 57 people, including three Filipinos, drowned after a tourist boat taking passengers on a dinner cruise capsized off Bahrain, officials said in Manila.

Two Filipinos were also among the 13 missing, while seven other Filipinos survived, the Department of Foreign Affairs said in Manila.

Officials in Bahrain said 137 people were on board the pleasure boat—mostly foreigners, including Britons, Americans, Germans, South Africans, Indians and Egyptians—when it sank on Thursday night.

Tourism sources said the small ship, called the Al-Dana, had a capacity of 100.

The boat's owner, quoted by Al Arabiya television, said the Arabic dhow may have been overcrowded and capsized when many passengers gathered on one side.

American and Bahraini officials said there was no indication the sinking was the result of an attack. "Up to this moment, it appears totally unlikely," Information Minister Mohammed Abdul-Ghaffar Abdullah said.

The identities of the Filipino fatalities—two males and one female—and the missing were not revealed by the DFA pending the notification of their families in the Philippines.

DFA spokesperson Gilberto Asuque told reporters in Manila the bodies of the Filipinos who died were identified by Ramon

3 FILIPINOS/A10

RP AMONG TOP 5

Migrant workers sent home \$167B last year, says UN

SINGAPORE—MIGRANT WORKERS in high-income countries remitted a record of more than \$167 billion to their families last year, a UN agency said as it called for measures to ensure the money is used for long-term development.

In countries including Bangladesh and the Philippines, annual remittances exceed official development aid and foreign direct investments, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Unescap) said in its latest report released

here Thursday.

If remittances sent through informal channels are counted, the figures could rise by as much as 50 percent, the UN's economic and social arm said.

As of 2004, three of the top five remittance-receiving countries in

the world were located in Asia—India which received \$21.3 billion, China with \$21.7 billion and the Philippines with \$11.6 billion, the report said.

Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are also among the major recipients of remittances, while

Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Nepal, Thailand and the Pacific island of Samoa benefit to a lesser extent.

The agency urged governments in recipient countries to cut the costs of sending money home and help the workers' fami-

MIGRANT/A8

Book of 12 little things means a lot to heal nation

By DJ Yap

AT THE HEIGHT OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS last year, a nondescript book was quietly published about "12 Little Things Every Filipino Can Do to Help Our Country."

The author's theory was simple: Small acts like obeying traffic rules, being a good parent and paying one's taxes could go a long way in healing a wounded nation.

Ten months later, the book written by Alexander Lacson, a lawyer, is proving the power of little things. It apparently struck a chord in many Filipinos who share its author's belief that the fate of the country depends not on its politicians but on its people.

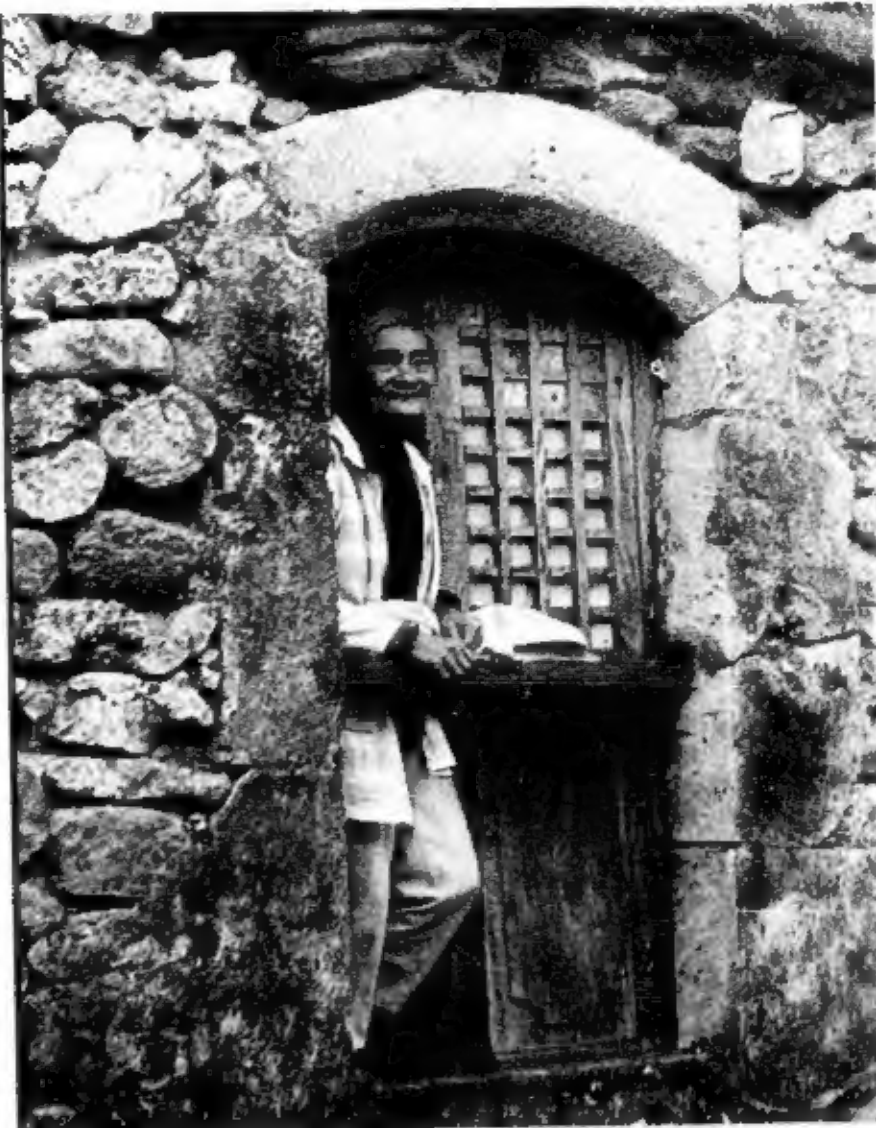
Now on its fourth printing run, "12 Little Things" has sold almost 25,000 copies, according to Lacson.

At first, the book was available only at Lacson's Makati office and his White Plains home. He had no marketing plan then, but when word got out about the little book, orders began pouring in, sometimes by the bulk.

On the book's first run in June last year, only 2,000 copies were printed by Alay Pinoy, whose owner is Lacson's friend. Within two months, they were sold out.

Soon, the publisher was printing 10,000

BOOK/A18



WHERE TIME STANDS STILL, and life goes on and on. Batanes in the extreme north of the Philippines has the biggest population of people aged 80 and above.

People weather storm of life longer in Batanes

By Blanche S. Rivera

LITERALLY LIVING IN THE EYE OF THE storm may be good, after all, as the elderly residents of the idyllic but storm-lashed islands of Batanes prove.

The northernmost tip of the Philippines has the biggest number of people aged 80 and above, in proportion to the islands' total population, and the lowest number of "younger senior citizens" or those aged 60-64, according to the Coalition of Services of the Elderly Inc. (COSE).

Of Batanes' 16,467 people (National Statistics Office, 2000), 16.7 percent are 80 years old and above, 26.4 percent are 60-64, and 14 percent are 75-79—suggesting a kinder environment for those who have literally weathered the storms of life.

"In general, the proportion of older persons is inversely proportional to the age, except in Batanes, where there are more people who are 80 years old and above than those in the 75-79 age bracket," said COSE's Profile of Filipino Older Persons.

Cebu, which has the biggest population among the provinces, also has the highest number of senior citizens, or 6.7 percent of its 3.35 million population.

It is followed by Negros Occidental, Pangasinan, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Zamboanga del

PEOPLE/A10

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon and Eastern Visayas will experience cloudy skies with rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over the Bicol region including the provinces of Aurora and Quezon which may trigger flashfloods and landslides. The rest of the country will be cloudy with rainshowers.

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI/RESEARCH/03/31/06 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FRONT PAGE

Text us your feedback: inquirer_news@inquirer.com.ph or 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Baliuag	Partly Cloudy
Bogota	Partly Cloudy	Baguio	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	San Jose	Partly Cloudy
Alabang	Partly Cloudy	San Carlos	Partly Cloudy
Clark	Partly Cloudy	San Juan	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	San Marcos	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	San Pablo	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	San Rafael	Partly Cloudy

Donors pledge more aid for Mindanao

INTERNATIONAL DONORS HAVE PLEDGED TO increase assistance to support the Philippine government's efforts to bring peace to Mindanao, long troubled by a Muslim insurgency, a World Bank official said Friday.

The commitment was made during a development forum Thursday in Tagaytay City attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo and representatives from 17 countries and donor agencies. "Yesterday, the President told us about the progress being made on the Mindanao peace process. She emphasized the importance of an early peace dividend on growth and greater inclusion," World Bank country director Joachim von Amsberg told reporters.

Ms Arroyo had appealed to international donors to give more development assistance to conflict areas in Mindanao ahead of an expected peace deal this year.

"I'd like to make a personal appeal to all of you, who plan to provide aid to Mindanao as peacekeepers, please consider providing your aid now even as we await the signing of the final peace accord," Ms Arroyo said

during the donors' meeting.

Ms Arroyo said the peace negotiations with the secessionist Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), hosted by Malaysia, were in their final stages to end nearly 40 years of Muslim rebellion that has killed more than 120,000 people and delayed development in resource-rich Mindanao.

"The Mindanao Working Group subsequently considered ways to support the government's peace and development initiatives, especially to conflict-prone areas that have thus far been neglected," said Amsberg who recently visited Mindanao to check on development projects.

The United States, the European Union, Australia and some Islamic states have pledged millions of dollars in development assistance to conflict areas as well as help check the spread of Muslim extremism in Mindanao.

Nearly 60 percent of about \$70

million development aid to the Philippines this year was allocated to Mindanao. An extra \$30 million was also pledged in 2003, when a fragile ceasefire was called, once the MILF signs a final deal with the government.

The World Bank is also putting together a \$50 million fund to rehabilitate and develop Muslim areas on Mindanao after conducting a survey to determine the requirements of residents affected by bloody conflicts.

Eid Kabalu, a spokesman for MILF said the rebel group has organized its own institution to handle development assistance from foreign donors, including contributions from individual Muslims, especially overseas workers.

The Bangsamoro Development Agency was created in 2002 as one of three components of the government's peace initiative in the south. The other two main issues were security and ancestral rights.

Philippine officials said sustaining development was vital to achieving peace in the region where the MILF has been waging a separatist rebellion since 1978.

AFP/Reuters



HER LOYAL SOLDIERS. Marines gather at the Marine Battalion Landing Team Compound in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan, to receive the personal thanks of a grateful President Macapagal-Arroyo. Elite Marine units were allegedly involved in the aborted coup plot last February.

LYN RILLON

PCGG willing to initiate compromise talks with Marcoses

By Alcuin Papa

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION on Good Government is not averse to making the initial move in opening talks with the widow of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos for a possible compromise on the Marcos ill-gotten wealth.

If a compromise settlement is concluded between the government through the PCGG and Imelda Marcos, it would end two decades of litigation over the ownership of an estimated \$5 to \$10 billion that Marcos allegedly stole from the country.

"I am willing to set the ball rolling because this will be all about general topics [initially]. I will call up the lawyer of Mrs. Marcos so we can sit down and talk," said Ricardo Abcede, the PCGG commissioner in charge of assets and management.

He added that it did not really matter who made the first move "as long as both parties are willing to sit and talk."

Abcede, who is pushing for an international auction of a cache of Imelda's extravagant jewelry collection that had been seized by the government, said both the government and the flamboyant former First Lady needed the compromise deal.

In the case of Imelda, "she would want to leave a good name in history as having helped the people by settling all these Marcos cases," he said.

On the other hand, the government needs the deal so the money

would be freed to fund the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program to benefit poor farmers.

"I see no harm in that," Abcede said.

Imelda, through her lawyer Robert Sison, has said she was open to compromise talks after Abcede earlier said the PCGG would be willing to talk about possibly dropping all civil cases against her in exchange for a large portion of the Marcos ill-gotten wealth, including the jewelry collection.

Earlier, Abcede also said a compromise deal on the jewelry collection could be a start of a "comprehensive" settlement with Imelda, to eventually include all Marcos assets all over the world.

Last year, the PCGG was set to auction off the estimated \$20 million jewelry collection, but Imelda went to court to stop the sale.

Abcede said the courts had already ruled in favor of the government on the issue of the ownership of the jewelry, most of which are

stored in the central bank vaults.

Sison has said that the government was pushing for a compromise agreement because it has failed to prove that Imelda was the owner of the disputed assets.

He also said that a compromise settlement would be a pragmatic approach to end almost two decades of litigation.

There are 578 civil cases pending before the Sandiganbayan anti-graft court with Imelda as either main defendant or co-accused.

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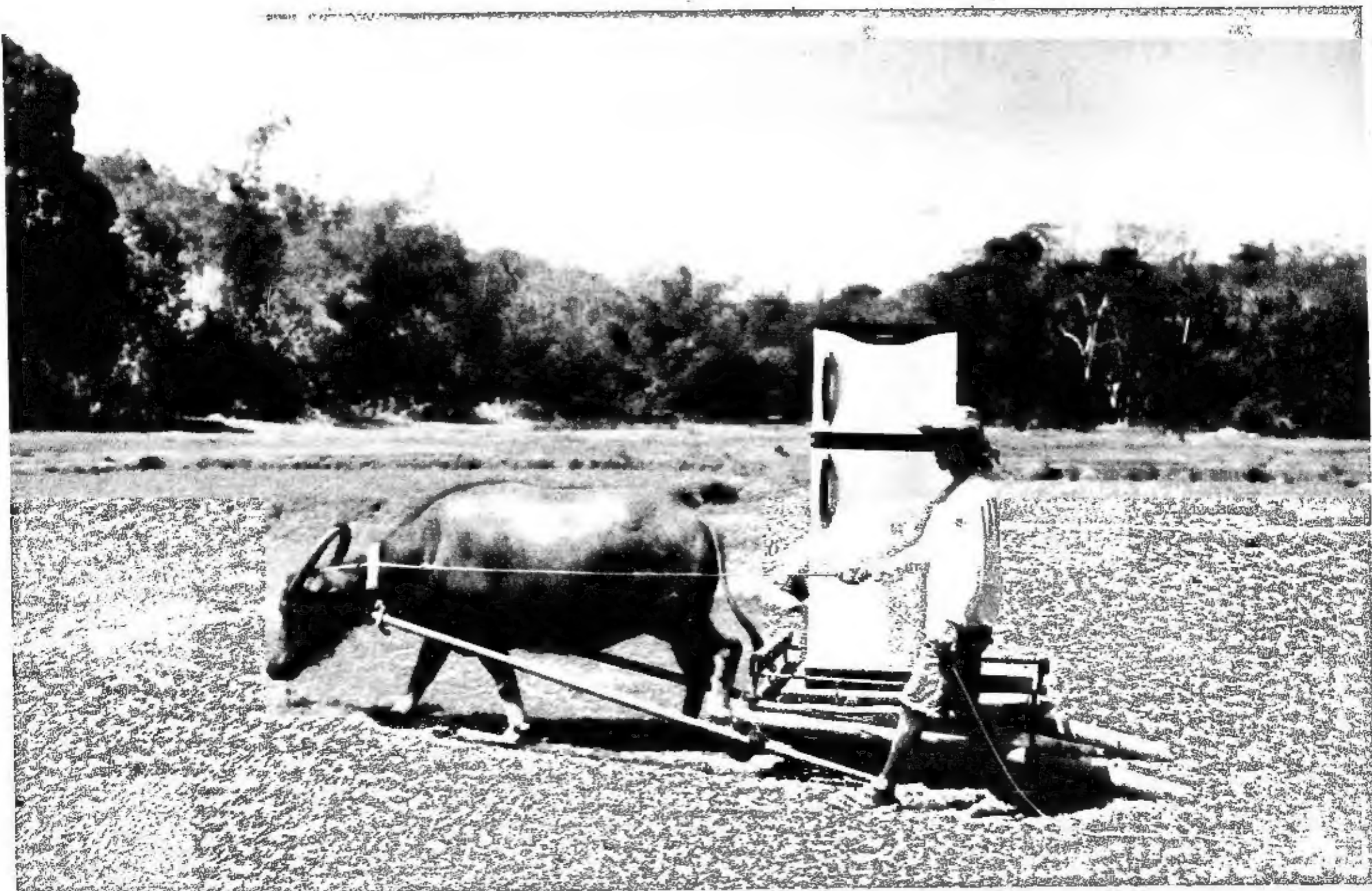
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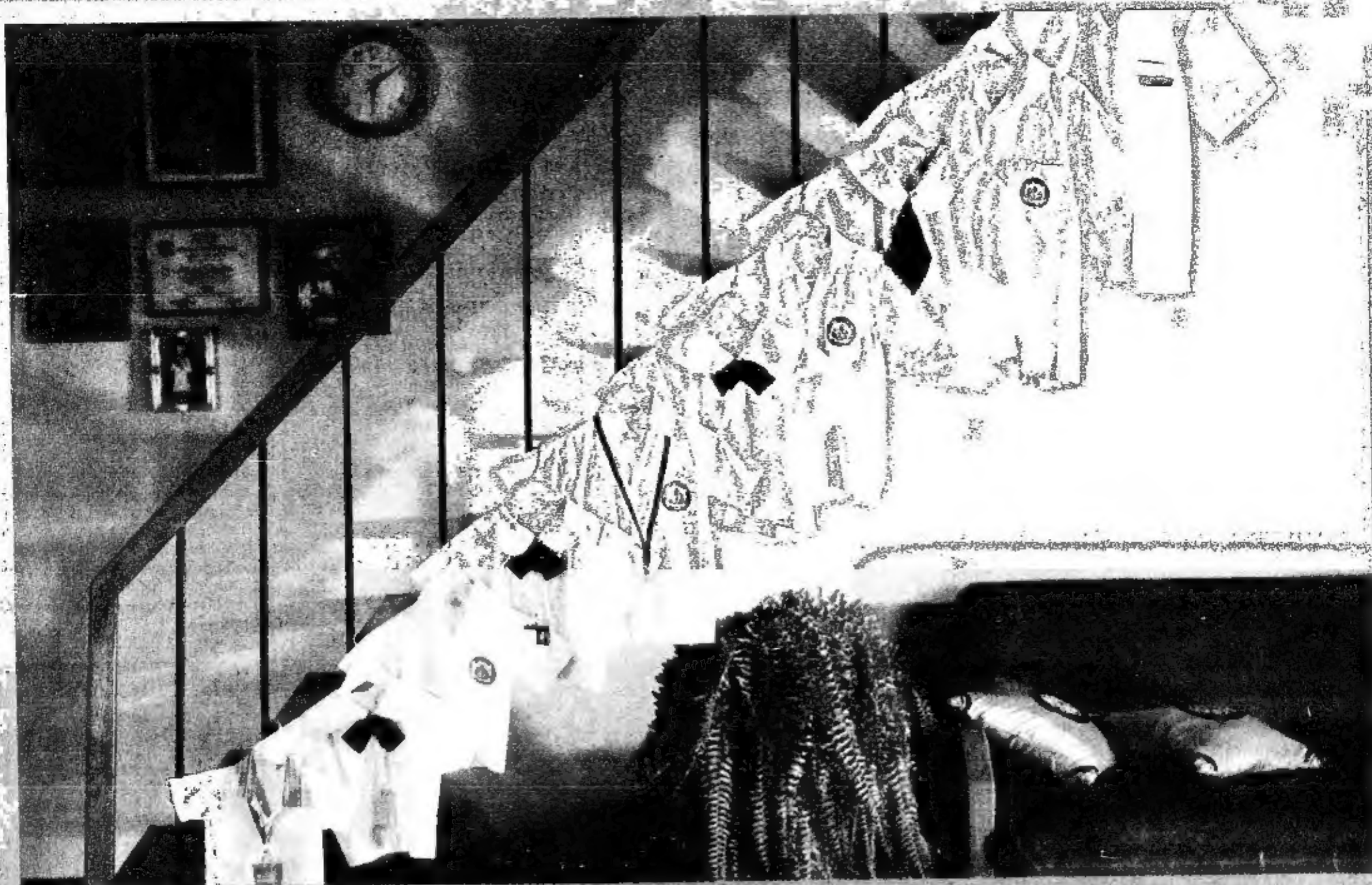


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Cha-cha now in Comelec

From page A1
not, he said.

But the poll body has no budget for the holding of a plebiscite, according to Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr.

"I don't know if we will be given [by Congress] but as of now, we don't have a budget for the referendum," he said.

Borra said the Comelec would need at least P2.6 billion for the exercise.

"It's like during elections when you need to prepare and allocate a budget for the printing of election paraphernalia as well as the voters' education campaign," he said.

4.8 million voters

To get a people's initiative off the ground, the signatures of 12 percent or 4.8 million of Filipino voters, with not less than 3 percent of any congressional district nationwide, are required.

In a visit to Negros Occidental last month, Speaker Jose de Venecia said he expected the number of signatures to reach as much as 8 million.

Daisy Real of the Negros Occidental Provincial Office said the verification process in the province would start on Monday.

She said the signatures gathered in Escalante, Calatrava, Pulupandan and La Carlota City had been submitted for verification.

In Manila, District 1 managed to gather 30,984 signatures out of the 186,600 registered voters (16.37 percent); District 2, 20,934 out of 125,007 (16.31 percent); District 3, 22,027 out of 136,750 (16.08 percent); District 4, 21,334 out of 135,199 (15.41 percent); District 5, 35,595 out of 191,102 (18.63 percent); and District 6, 24,249 out of 137,925 (17.55 percent).

League of Barangay president Car-

los Castañeda said they initially had difficulty in convincing the residents to affix their signatures to the petition.

"But we just had to explain to them the advantages and disadvantages of amending our Constitution," Castañeda said.

He denied that money was involved in the signature drive.

Organized scheme

The Department of Interior and Local Government has been circulating among its regional directors a memorandum by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez to legitimize the government's vigorous push for Charter change, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said yesterday.

Gonzalez issued the memorandum on "the legality of government employees campaigning for Charter change" to Speaker Jose de Venecia as early as Jan. 24.

"That's one of the papers being circulated by the DILG to its regional directors and officials. The DILG is in effect telling its officials, 'Hey, don't worry, we have the opinion of the [justice] secretary. What you're doing is above the law,'" Pimentel said in an interview.

In theory, Pimentel said, government employees could campaign for a nonpartisan issue like Charter change. But the problem was, he said, "they're making it very partisan."

On Thursday, opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III presented to reporters copies of official documents obtained from the DILG, including Gonzalez's memorandum, indicating the government's active involvement in the signature drive powering a people's initiative for amending the Constitution.

"I've never seen a more organized scheme," Osmeña said.

The other documents he presented were one detailing the procedure for

verifying the signatories against the list of registered voters; one on the key differences between parliamentary and presidential systems; a sample format of the form for the people's initiative; a document on the guidelines for signature solicitors, barangay and municipal coordinators; and a copy of a local registrar's certification.

Osmeña also presented a March 10 memorandum by Interior Undersecretary Wencelito Andanan enjoining barangay officials to attend the barangay assemblies set on March 25 and Oct. 21.

Political neutrality

Gonzalez said in the memorandum that in general, civil servants should observe political neutrality because public service "would be more truly devoted to public welfare" if they were not politically active.

He said this idea was backed by a court ruling that civil service officers and employees were servants of the state and "not agents of a political group," and by Section 2, Paragraph 4 of Article IX of the Constitution, saying that no civil servant shall engage in partisan political campaign.

But Gonzalez noted that under Section 45 of the Omnibus Election Code, government employees may express their views on current political issues.

"In our jurisdiction, a leading authority in constitutional issues has opined that 'campaigning for or against a plebiscite, initiative or referendum... does not constitute partisan political activity,'" he said.

According to Gonzalez, a plebiscite, initiative or referendum is "not an election," and involves only issues, not candidates for public office.

"Hence, officers and employees in

Noli has a role in new scheme of things

By Michael Lim Ubac

THERE'S A PLACE FOR VICE PRESIDENT Noli de Castro in the planned unicameral parliament.

According to Rep. Constantino Jaraula, chair of the House committee on constitutional amendments, De Castro will, in effect, convene the interim parliament that will complete "the process of amendments and revisions" of the Constitution.

"The Vice President will preside over the national assembly and we will elect the interim prime minister and speaker," Jaraula said, citing the transitory provisions of the proposed Constitution that was passed by the committee last month and that would, he said, likely be considered as a working draft by the national assembly.

As for President Macapagal-Arroyo, Jaraula said, "she remains President until 2010 but will share power with the Prime Minister."

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles had said in earlier interviews that Ms Arroyo would exercise some "ceremonial powers," belying opposition claims that Charter change would only prolong the latter's stay in power.

But Ms Arroyo's allies in the House want her to hold the dual posts of President and Prime Minister until her term ends in 2010, which will even increase her powers.

Not to JDV's liking

This scenario will not be to Speaker Jose de Venecia's liking.

De Venecia, who has pushed for Charter change since 1992, is proposing a modified French model of the parliamentary system, in which the country will be run by a President aided by a Prime Minister, who will act as the government's chief operating officer.

The House minority has a different view. "I guarantee you that she will be Prime Minister. Let's stop fooling the people," said Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano.

Per Cayetano's reckoning, the plan is to make Ms Arroyo Prime Minister and De Venecia ceremonial President.

"That is why De Venecia agreed to make the powers of the Prime Minister very powerful, banned turncoatism and [initially] supported No-el (the scrapping of the 2007 elections)," said Cayetano, a lawyer.

"De Venecia is intelligent enough to know that when it happens, Ms Arroyo will take the Prime Minister post for herself. He is in a trap. If he doesn't go along with the plan of Malacañang, the parliament will not happen," Cayetano said.

What's next after the process of the people's initiative is completed? Who will sit in the parliament and define the powers and prerogatives of the new government?

According to Jaraula, the Senate and the House will have to move to prevent a power vacuum and define the parameters of the transition period.

He said legislators could not abdicate their constitutional duty to enact laws to ensure the stability of the new system.

the career civil service can actively participate in the discussion of plebiscite, initiative or referendum issues without violating Civil Service rules and regulations," Gonzalez said.

De Castro's support

In Tagaytay City, Vice President Noli de Castro threw his support behind Ms Arroyo's call for Charter change through a people's initiative.

Addressing the Philippine Development Forum with the international donor community, De Castro said the Philippines was in need of strong institutions guided by accountability and transparency.

"We need to organize ourselves in a manner that will facilitate the policy process. If what we need is a change in the form of government, so be it," De Castro said, adding:

"Let that change proceed in a manner that is consistent with the will of our people. What is important is that we do not allow ourselves to be distracted from the true focus of governance, which is development."

He said development was not an affair of the state alone and must instead involve all stakeholders, especially the people.

"But in our stage of political evolution, it is also important to realize that a strong state is a necessary ingredient in any national development effort," De Castro said.

No way but success

"Why did I say that? Because any reform within a democratic framework will be pulled in various directions by the different interest groups that are deeply entrenched in our economic and political system. When that happens, the state should be able to decide in favor of the common good and not give in to one or a number of vested interests," he said.

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said Charter change could "no longer be hindered by those who intend to use the current political system to protect their hold on power."

Drawing on the President's metaphor on the "train" of Charter change, Bunye said in a statement: "Unfortunately for them, the train has left the station and there is no way for the initiative to amend the Constitution but to succeed."

"We say it is high time for our political leaders, regardless of political persuasion, to ride the wave of the future or be left by the wayside."

In a dzRH interview, Bunye said the President was backing the signature drive because she was elated by the fact that many people had signed up in support of Charter change in a matter of days.

He issued the reminder that Ms Arroyo had always said it was the people who should decide on the mode of amending the Constitution.

At a press briefing, Bunye said he found De Venecia's proposed timeline for Charter change, including having an interim parliament in place by July, "very optimistic."

But he said he did not want to contradict De Venecia, "a seasoned politician [with] a feel of the situation on the ground."

"He has reasons for making that prediction," Bunye said. With reports from Doris C. Dumlaog, Christine O. Avendaño, Norman Bordadora and Jerome Aning in Manila

Puno annoyed; nothing in 'Horizon'

AT THE DILG, INTERIOR Secretary Ronaldo Puno expressed annoyance over a GMA 7 news video showing Rolando Acosta, director of the DILG's Bureau of Local Government Supervision, and two men bearing boxes at the Horizon Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

Acosta's presence at the hotel set off speculations that the boxes contained signature forms, and that he was overseeing certain shady "operations."

"If I were going to do something illegal in connection with the people's

initiative, why would I do it at that hotel? Why would I do it at Solo Hotel?" Puno said.

He was referring to the reputation of the two hotels as sites of past clandestine political operations.

"Rolly Acosta is perhaps one of the most apolitical personnel at the DILG. If you're going to accuse anybody of partisanship at the department, he'd be the last," Puno said.

Reached for comment, Acosta said he was at the Horizon to meet "long-time friends."

"I don't know anything about those

boxes," he said.

Balikbayan from Hawaii

Puno said one of the two men carrying the boxes was identified by Mandaluyong Rep. Benhur Abalos as a balikbayan from Hawaii.

The Inquirer called Abalos for confirmation, and he said one of the men was a certain Bernie Albano, who was touring the Philippines with a relative.

He was billeted at Room 319 and the boxes he had with him contained woks (stir-fry pans).

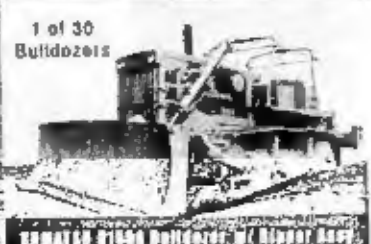
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Corrections

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, the list of bar topnotchers on Page A21 misspelled the first name of the 1947 first-placer. The topnotcher that year was Ameurina Melencio—not Aumerina.

IN YESTERDAY'S issue, a story on Page A2—"Ena slams NBA on land mine use"—misspelled the first name of the spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines. The spokesperson is Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal—not Rogelio Rosal.

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Nora Aunor pleads guilty to drug rap, skips jail term

From page A1

said they found 8 grams of methamphetamine (known in the Philippines as shabu) in a film container in her carry-on bag.

On Wednesday, she entered her plea before Superior Court Judge James Brandlin and joined a drug-diversion program, according to Superior Court spokesperson Susan Matherly.

Sentencing was delayed for 18 months. Aunor could then request the charge be dropped if she would finish all the diversion requirements, Matherly said Thursday.

Treatment over jail

Criminal proceedings were suspended when she was accepted into Drug Court on Dec. 22.

The court emphasizes treatment over incarceration.

But Aunor left that program earlier this month after failing to reach an agreement with another judge over her request to be allowed to travel outside of Los Angeles.

Her attorneys, Sherwin Edberg and Claire Espina, decided to enroll Aunor in the drug-diversion program which has a more permissive program to allow her to meet her filming and concert schedules for 2006.

The entertainer has upcoming concerts in the US cities of San Francisco, Boston, Washington and in the state of Ohio, according to her lawyers.

Drug court vs diversion

Aunor's lawyer explained the

difference between Drug Court and the diversion program.

"Drug Court requires no plea to be made while undergoing the program, while diversion does, plus, Drug Court requires random drug testing and diversion does not," Espina said.

"After Nora was granted delistment from Drug Court on March 16 [at her request], she was enrolled in the Deferred Entry of Judgment program under the Diversion Statute PC 1000 on March 29," she said.

Cleaning up

"The matter is stayed pending 18 months, at which time if there are no other arrests, the [guilty] plea is withdrawn—as if [it was] never made. There is no record of conviction, the case is dismissed and the arrest stricken from the

record," the lawyer added.

According to Jane Robison, spokesperson for the Los Angeles County district attorney, Aunor found that the old program did not fit her lifestyle as an entertainer because it prohibited traveling.

"When a person wants to clean up her life, this is how it's handled," Robison said. "But she has a long way to go."

The new program would last 18 months, was less restrictive but still required routine drug testing, said Robison.

When Aunor completes the drug-diversion program, Robison said, she could ask the judge to dismiss the charge.

40 drug tests

During the four months that Aunor was enrolled in the Drug

Court program, she remained in full compliance with the program and passed all drug testing.

Espina added: "Nora underwent in excess of 40 drug tests while under Drug Court and is no longer required to undergo any drug testing from hereon either. She will need to return in October 2007 for the closure of the case unless defense makes a motion for early termination which we may decide to make prior to October 2007."

Aunor, whose real name is

Nora Cabaltera Villamayor, retains her Philippine citizenship but has spent much of her time in recent years at her home in Linda Vista, north of San Diego.

She has appeared in more than 170 films and recorded more than two dozen albums, including scores of hit singles.

On screen, she has starred with many of the leading men of her time, including Joseph Estrada, who became the country's president. With reports from AP, AFP, Reuters

Come home, now 'na' ...

From page A1

controversial US immigration reform bill heats up.

"Those who are staying in the US in violation of US immigration laws should come home," Gilberto Asuque, DFA spokesperson, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview when asked what Filipino illegal immigrants could do amid the raging debate over HR 4437. This is better known as "The Border Protection, Anti-Terror, and Illegal Immigration Control Bill." (See related story on Page A21.)

"All we can advise them is to follow US immigration laws, the same way that we Filipinos want foreigners to follow our own laws," Asuque said.

According to the DFA spokesperson, there were 92,000 Filipino "irregulars" or "those without proper documents."

But that number is much higher according to the Commission of Filipinos Overseas. Based on 2004 figures, there were 2.79 million Filipinos in the US and in its territories Guam and Northern Marianas. Of this number, 2.31 million are residents and immigrants, 119,802 have working visas while some 351,750 are undocumented or illegals, the commission said.

The militant labor group, Migrant International, however, estimated that there were actually some 1 million undocumented Filipinos in the US.

The promise of "economic gains" in the land of milk and honey remains the primary reason Filipinos dare go and work there despite the lack of proper immigration documents, according to Connie Bragas-Regalado, Migrant chairperson.

"For them, it is still better there compared to the lives they have here in the Philippines. But they still do cheap labor there," Bragas-Regalado told the INQUIRER in an interview earlier this week.

Monitor developments

Asuque said that the most the Philippine government and its embassy and consulates in the US could do was monitor the developments in the US Congress.

"It is still a draft legislation and from what we've read in reports, the [US] Senate bill is more accommodating to the [illegal] immigrants. We are monitoring developments," he added.

The DFA, Asuque said, was "observing how the US is drafting the legislation" instead of "making public statements on an internal matter [in the US]."

He said that it was the Filipino-American communities themselves that were lobbying against the bill.

Open letters

Some 50 members of the Filipino community who attended the "Pulong Bayan" sponsored by the Philippine Consulate General in New York last March 23 rejected HR 4437.

At the meeting, Ruben Seguritan, a New York-based Filipino-American lawyer practicing immigration law for more than 30 years, distributed sample copies of a "Letter to the Judiciary Committee Member" and an "Open Letter to President Bush," according to Consul General Cecilia Rebong in her report to the DFA.

Both letters rejected HR 4437 and instead supported a "comprehensive immigration reform bill that is just, humane and realistic."

P328 billion sent home

Migrant said it was dissatisfied with the DFA's words and actions.

Bragas-Regalado said that Ms Arroyo ought to make a "categorical statement" against the bill, considering that Filipinos in the United States represent the largest Filipino community outside the Philippines, and comprise the third largest migrant community in the United States.

About more than half of the remittances that the Philippines received from overseas Filipino workers last year came from US-based Filipinos, the group added.

Remittances from Filipinos in the United States, Guam and Northern Marianas amounted to \$4.9 billion (P251 billion) in 2004 and \$6.4 billion (P328 billion) last year, according to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Pinoys protest

Last weekend, the United States saw emotional demonstrations by illegal immigrants and their supporters—half a million in Los Angeles and tens of thousands in other states—against the proposed measure.

Passed in the US House of Representatives last year, the bill would make the "unlawful presence" of undocumented immigrants in the United States a felony and providing assistance to illegal immigrants a federal offense against anyone—whether they be family members, church members or civil society groups.

Those opposing the bill argued that it should give illegal immigrants a path towards legalizing their stay in the US, instead of slapping them with prison terms. With PDI Research

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Senators warn: Runaway train headed for cliff, legal obstacles

From page A1

The two senators said the people's initiative being pushed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to accomplish her goal of Charter change so she could stay in power would likely be derailed by legal obstacles.

"The Cha-cha train would not run over those who oppose it. Instead, it would be derailed because it is a runaway train with rogue passengers who get paid to ride but would be hurt when the train gets off the loose tracks," Sen. Arroyo said.

"The Cha-cha train has no congressional franchise to operate (a valid initiative law) nor an engine with a valid license to operate it (Comelec)," Arroyo said in a statement.

He was referring to the absence of an enabling law that would justify revising the Constitution through collection of signatures, and the Commission on Elections' lack of authority to approve such an initiative.

Pimentel, in an interview, called on "those riding the Cha-cha train (to) get

off as quickly as possible because their train is heading for a cliff as a result of the flaw in the constitution of the train and the lack of proper direction of the ones operating the train."

In Never-Never Land

"JDV (Speaker Jose de Venecia) is the champion dreamer of fascinating goals and Gloria is his intended beneficiary, but they're both living in Never-Never Land," Pimentel said. "Whatever Speaker De Venecia says, I take that with a sack of salt, not just with a grain of salt."

De Venecia had said that barring hitches, the Philippines could shift to a parliamentary system in three months.

Ms Arroyo, in a speech on Thursday, compared the Cha-cha initiative to a train that had already left its station. She said it was time for politicians to stand back or get run over.

Under the Cha-cha, the country would replace its decades-old presidential style of government with a parlia-

mentary government with Ms Arroyo at the helm in the interim.

Big obstacle

Arroyo and Pimentel agreed that a huge obstacle—a 1987 Supreme Court ruling that there was no sufficient law for such an initiative—lay in the path of the Malacañang-backed locomotive.

"The Comelec is courting a contempt citation from the Supreme Court for proceeding with the initiative," Arroyo said, apparently referring to Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Jr. statement that his office could start validating the signatures already collected by those behind Cha-cha.

Senate President Franklin Drilon yesterday accused the Arroyo administration of trying to condition the public mind that a people's initiative could be done without an enabling law.

Speaking before the International Association of Business Communicators conference in Makati, Drilon said: "We shall continue to explain to our people

Pimentel sees Puno's hand

SENATE MINORITY LEADER AQUILINO Pimentel Jr. said yesterday he had received information that Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno met with select barangay officials and told them to discuss changing the form of government during the barangay assemblies held last weekend.

Puno also told the officials that the assemblies should not discuss the term of President Macapagal-Arroyo, Pimentel said, quoting information from sources he described as "officials" of the Department of Interior and Local Government. He did not name the officials.

Puno has emphatically denied any role in the people's initiative and vowed to go after any DILG official who might be involved.

Speaking at a forum in Ambassador Ho-

tel, Pimentel claimed the DILG "master-minded" the printing of forms used in the signature campaign to carry out the people's initiative, pointing out that the forms used throughout the nation were similar.

Thus, public funds had been spent for these, he said.

Pimentel also said he had received information that each district was given P500,000 for the the campaign to change the form of government, and that the money was coursed through ATM accounts of the coordinators.

He said some of the coordinators, who either held barangay assemblies or door to door campaigns, even returned some of the money that was not used. By Lella B. Salaverria

that the truth is we must follow what the Supreme Court has said or what our Con-

stitution says. Otherwise, we will have anarchy in our country."

Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan urged Malacañang to rethink its position of going all out for Cha-cha, saying there was no guarantee the people would approve it in a plebiscite.

Other opponents of Cha-cha did more than talk yesterday.

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) said it had gathered 2,000 signatures in just two hours in support of a petition against amending the 1987 Constitution.

This counter-signature collection, dubbed People's Movement Against Arroyo's Charter Change (PEOPLE'S MARCH), occurred at the SM North MRT station in Quezon City.

The numbers seemed puny compared to the supposed 4 to 5 million signatures Cha-cha supporters had collected—purportedly after ensnaring people with offers of rice, sardines or P200 per signature.

"The big difference is that people sign up against Cha-cha without expecting anything in return. For them it's not about cash giveaways and gifts. They voluntarily sign because they don't want GMA to stay in power," Bayan secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. said in a statement.

The equally militant Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, called on farmers to launch Oplan Bawi Pirma, an operation to rescind the pro-Cha-cha signatures gathered by barangay officials.

"Many pretexts were used to fool the masses into signing this so-called initiative, from ... an assurance (against) eviction to a proof of not being a New People's Army member ... and others," KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos said.

Churchmen also opposed

Some churchmen are also wary over Cha-cha. Evangelist Bro. Eddie Villanueva, leader of the 3-million-strong Jesus is Lord Movement, called the move "illegal and immoral."

Citing reports from the Bangon Pilipinas Movement, a coalition he also heads, Villanueva claimed some government employees were made to each gather 10 signatures to support Cha-cha.

Bishop Leonardo Medroso of Borongan, Samar said the effort could not be called a people's initiative because "it was initiated by public officials." With reports from Blanche S. Rivera, Lella B. Salaverria, Philip C. Tubewa and Christian V. Esguerra

Migrant ...

From page A1
lies channel the funds into more productive endeavors.

Countries exporting migrant workers should also take steps to improve their skills and tighten policies to ensure they do not fall prey to unscrupulous recruitment agencies, Unescap said.

"Policy-makers need to recognize that remittances are private flows of money that need to be treated as such. Therefore, these flows should not be taxed," it said.

The money has already been taxed in the country of origin and imposing taxes will discourage workers from sending funds through the banking system, it added.

'Very high' fees

It noted that levies charged by remittance service providers "are very high," with fees for small transfers reaching as high as 10-15 percent.

"There is no doubt that more can be done to increase the volume of home remittances and to enable the recipients to use them more effectively," Unescap said.

"Additional measures should be taken to increase the access of poor migrant workers and their families to formal financial institutions."

Unescap urged banks in the workers' home countries to establish branches in host nations and allow micro-credit institutions and credit unions to transfer funds to rural households.

The agency also said governments should give the right information about job opportunities to prevent situations in which families borrow huge sums to send a worker abroad, only to discover that the earnings are not enough to recover the cost.

Major sources

In the Asia Pacific region, Australia, Hong Kong, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea and Singapore are major sources of remittances for developing countries.

For Laos and Burma, neighboring Thailand is a key source of workers' remittances, Unescap said.

Outside the region, Canada, the United States, Britain, France, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States are the main source of foreign workers' remittances.

An increasing number of remittance senders are women, it noted. AFP



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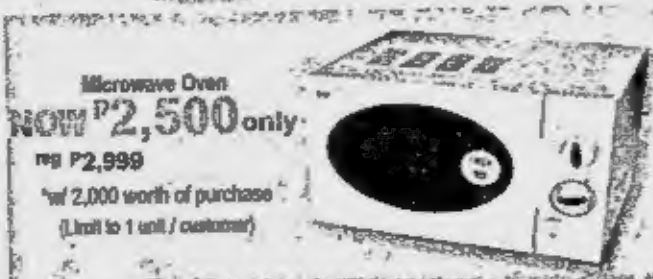
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New SC justice vows to speed up 'turtle in crutches'

By Armand N. Nocum

NEWLY APPOINTED SUPREME Court Associate Justice Presbitero J. Velasco Jr. yesterday vowed to speed up the resolution of court cases amid complaints from the public that the Philippine judiciary was working like a "turtle in crutches."

Velasco, the 10th member of the high court to be appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo, also stressed that the big number of Arroyo appointees in the high court would not necessarily make it subservient to the Palace.

"All of us are committed to work toward the attainment of equitable and efficient justice for all," he said of the Arroyo appointees, adding that the President could not be blamed because the vacancies occurred during her time.

The 57-year-old justice admits that his entry into the 15-man court comes at the time when the court is being criticized for its failure to speed up the resolution of cases, noting that some critics say it moves like a turtle in crutches.

"I intend to devote my time [to] the speedy resolution of cases," said Velasco, who missed the chance of entering the court five times in so many years, having been recommended for the post by the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC) since 2002.

Describing the President's decision to appoint him as "God's will," Velasco said his role in the judiciary was "to uphold ethics in the court."

'Gov't is biggest gambling lord'

By Christian Esguerra and Gil Cabacungan Jr.

THE ADMINISTRATION of President Macapagal-Arroyo is the "biggest gambling lord in the country," according to antigambling crusader Archbishop Oscar Cruz.

Cruz, who generated several congressional investigations in his high-profile campaign against "jueteng" last year, has now turned his attention to the small town lottery (STL), a numbers game that was introduced during the Aquino administration and recently revived by the government.

Cruz said the revival of STL amounted to a legalization of jueteng, the illegal numbers game.

The revival of the STL, a game of chance patterned after jueteng but closely supervised by local governments, was the brainchild of Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, who is the President's antigambling czar.

Hagedorn sees the STL, which is being bankrolled and managed by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, as providing an alternative livelihood to people displaced by the cessation of jueteng.

But Cruz, who heads the Krusadang Bayan Laban sa Jueteng, said the President was making the country "ethically bankrupt" by introducing both the rich and the poor to gambling.

In his view, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (Pagcor), which supervises casinos, including the new VIP Slots Club Project in Balibago, Angeles City, takes care of the rich gamblers while the PCSO which manages the lotto and the resurrected STL attends to the poor gamblers.

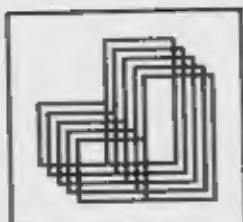
Apart from Velasco, others recommended to the post by the JBC to fill up the seat vacated by former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. were newly appointed Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura, newly resigned Solgen Alfredo Benipayo, Sandiganbayan Justice Teresita de Castro and Court of Appeals Justice Roberto Barrios.

Velasco also vowed to pursue judicial reform initiatives started by Davide. As court administrator, Velasco played a key role in implementing Davide's Action Program for Judicial Reforms (APJR), which includes establishing a court management information system, a case-flow management system to speed up the resolution of cases and the computerization of all the courts throughout over country.

He was instrumental in the passage and approval of a law that provided special allowances to justices and judges to double their basic salaries within four years. This resulted in the filling up of vacancies in the municipal and regional trial courts all over the country.

Before joining the high court, Velasco also served as an undersecretary of the Department of Justice and an associate justice of the Court of Appeals where he ranked eighth among all justices in the disposition of cases.

A graduate of the University of the Philippines, Velasco placed 6th in the 1971 bar examinations with a score of 89.85 percent.



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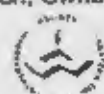
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3 Filipinos among 57 drowned in Bahrain

From page A1
Nerida, a Philippine Embassy officer in Bahrain.

The seven Filipinos who survived were identified in the Nerida report as Lilia Hermoso, Bayani Hermoso, Lanette Salgado, Segunda Siena, Hyacinth Dacay Perez, Abigail Silva, and Pamela Belardo. Perez, Silva and Belardo suffered minor injuries and were brought to the Salmaniya Medical Complex for treatment.

The four other Filipino survivors have returned to their homes in Manama, Bahrain's capital.

Salgado and the two missing Filipinos were among the crew members of the boat that capsized at around 9 p.m. (Bahrain time), Asuque said.

"A company had a party on the tourist boat. There were 150 people on the guest list but 15 did not get on the boat," Asuque said.

He said that it could not yet be ascertained how many Filipinos were actually on board when the accident happened. Initial reports indicated there

were 20 Filipinos on board.

It is possible that some people tried to swim ashore as the Al-Dana capsized less than a mile off the coast, and that might account for some of the missing, Interior Ministry spokesperson Col. Tarik al-Hassan said.

Bahrain, a tiny island nation on the western side of the Persian Gulf, is the home of the US 5th Fleet.

Alerted by cell phone

The ship overturned while on an evening cruise that was to last several hours.

"Things were going all right, people were dancing, people were having fun, but the boat was very crowded," Khalil Mirza, a Bahraini survivor, told The Associated Press.

The coast guard said there had been a dinner party on board Al-Dana before it sailed. He said the first word on the accident came from a survivor who alerted authorities from his mobile telephone saying the boat suddenly listed.

Survivors hugged each other. Some

had blood streaming down their faces. Several wept uncontrollably as friends and relatives tried to calm them.

Hassan said the dead included 17 citizens of India and 13 from Britain.

He listed the death toll from other nations as: Pakistan five, South Africa four, Philippines three, Singapore two, Germany one and Ireland one.

The 11 remaining dead had not been identified.

"God willing, there will be other survivors," Hassan said.

Bahrain TV showed pictures of rescue workers using pick-axes to try to break through the bottom of the vessel.

Earlier, Abdullah told Al Arabiya television that initial reports suggested the dead may also include 20 Filipinos, 10 South Africans and 10 Egyptians.

Hassan said the ship's captain, who is non-Bahraini, was being investigated.

A survivor told Al Jazeera that the two-story boat had capsized after apparently being struck by a wave as it was turning. Reuters, AP, Nikko Dizon



PLEASURE BOAT carrying 137 people on board for dinner and dancing is reduced to wreckage after it capsized. Search and rescue workers try to break through the bottom of the two-story vessel. Dozens of bodies have been recovered.

BAHRAIN BOAT SINKS

A tourist boat carrying more than 130 people on a dinner cruise sank off Bahrain. They were mostly Asians on board but it also included Europeans and Arabs



REUTERS

People . . .

From page A1

Sur, Iloilo, Davao del Sur and Batangas.

Remote Batanes has the smallest population among the 77 provinces, but it has the biggest percentage of older persons.

68 on the average

Filipinos live an average of 68 years, and this median age has been unchanged since 1990, according to COSE, which collated NSO data on the elderly last year.

But the Philippines is losing young family members who traditionally take care of aging parents to better-paying jobs abroad.

In 2000, around 15.2 million households in the Philippines were headed by a senior citizen, meaning 57 percent of the country's 5.4 million older people took responsibility for their families.

Recognizing the predicament of Filipino seniors, who are left to fend for themselves and even for their grandchildren, COSE trained more than 470 home care assistants, masseurs and community gerontologists for its home care program in Metro Manila.

Asean aid for seniors

Noting the burgeoning population of older persons in the region, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) yesterday pledged \$900,000 for its member-states who have welfare services for the elderly.

The Philippines will receive its funding assistance through COSE, an umbrella group of 45 organizations for senior citizens, for the expansion of its home care program to the provinces and training of more volunteers until 2008.

"The project is a good example of how collaboration between different departments can help address an important issue from all its dimensions," Bounpheng Philavong, Asean senior health officer for human development, said in a speech.

"Activities under the second phase will build on the momentum established during the first phase and move toward integrating aging population concerns into national development agendas," he said.

Funds' major source: Korea

Philavong led representatives of the 10 Asean member-countries and Korea, a major source of funding for the program, at yesterday's closing of the regional workshop for the elderly's welfare.

"The project is implemented at the right time because aging is occurring at a very rapid rate throughout the countries of the region," he said.

The Philippines ranks seventh of 10 Asean countries in terms of the older persons' proportion to the total population, according to the United Nations Development Program's 2005 Human Development Report.

Singapore has the biggest number of senior citizens at 6.5 percent of its population. Next come Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma (Myanmar), Malaysia, the Philippines, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Brunei, in that order.

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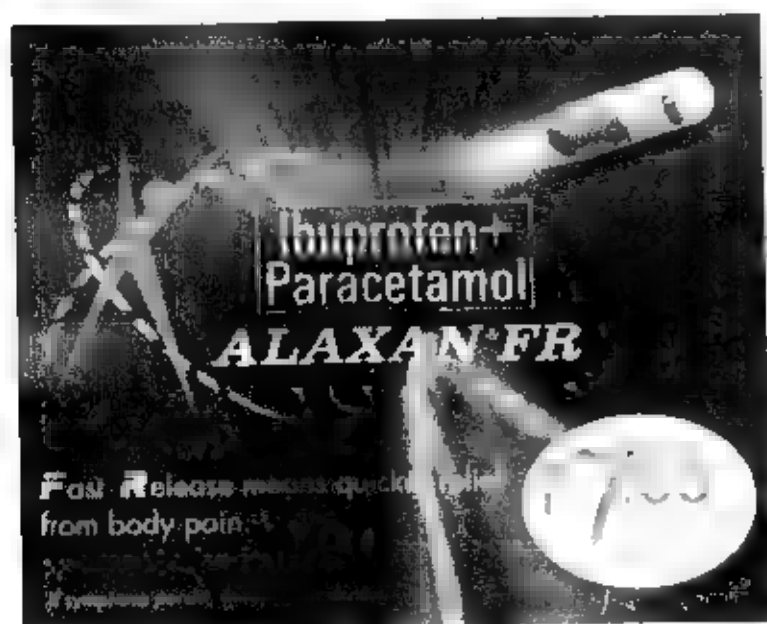
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Book of 12 little things means a lot to heal nation



From page A1
copies, then 3,000, and 10,000 more copies.

Book deal

National Bookstore later approached him for a book deal, since customers had kept asking why "12 Little Things" was not on its shelves, Lacson said. The store now offers his book.

The success of the book caught Lacson by surprise, but he does not have to struggle for an explanation.

"We are really at a crucial stage where people are looking for solutions to their problems," he told the INQUIRER in an interview. "There's a hunger for urgent solutions. And the solution I'm offering is so easy to grasp that anyone can become part of the solution."

If every Filipino does his share of nation-building—not in grik-0.2

and but practical, doable ways—then the country will definitely change for the better, Lacson said.



NOTHING GRAND, but the little things proposed by lawyer-author Alexander Lacson make a big difference in the life of a nation.
EDWIN SACASNA

His "12 Little Things" are as follow:

1. Follow traffic laws. Follow the law.
2. Whenever you buy or pay for anything, always ask for an official receipt.
3. Don't buy smuggled goods. Buy local. Buy Filipino.
4. When you talk to others, especially foreigners, speak positively about us and our country.
5. Respect your traffic officer, policeman and soldier.
6. Do not litter, dispose of your garbage properly. Segregate. Recycle. Conserve.
7. Support your church.
8. During elections, do your solemn duty.
9. Pay your employees well.
10. Pay your taxes.
11. Adopt a scholar or a poor child.
12. Be a good parent. Teach your kids to follow the law and love our country.

Foreword by Cory, Eggie

Former President Corazon Aquino and Inquirer founder Eugenia Apostol wrote the foreword to Lacson's book.

"It is good to read about Filipinos like Alex Lacson who continue to be very positive about our country. Very often, we hear people complaining about conditions in our country and always putting the blame on someone else," Aquino wrote.

She added, "It is good that Alex believes that the answer to our problems lies in each and every Filipino."

Apostol said, "I had never met Alex Lacson—nor read him—until he sent the manuscript for this book to my house, asking me for a foreword. I read the manuscript and said, wow, yes, I would be happy to forewarn readers about it."

She proceeded with her own "12 little don'ts" about the book, such as "Don't buy this book because you will be bothered by it" and "Don't read it because it will change you."

Fr. Ruben Tanseco S.J. of the Center for Family Ministries and Manuel Pangilinan, chair and chief executive officer of telecommunication giant PLDT, also endorsed the book.

Secrets of developed world

It took Lacson seven months to come up with the dozen "do-it-yourself" list, writing on Saturdays and Sundays, away from his private law practice.

For years, he studied the lives and works of leaders like Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew to find out the secrets of the developed world, he said.

His study led to a discovery: "I found that an important ingredient in development is good citizenship."

"Look at the people of Japan, Singapore, US ... They have good citizens who follow the law, perform their duties to the government and their responsibilities to the people," he said.

Good citizenship means showing respect for the neighborhood traffic officer or throwing litter into the garbage can, he said.

Lacson said his book should not be treated merely as a reaction to political crises.

"I believe that (the book) transcends governments ... When I wrote it, I just wanted to help the country," he said.

He said the crisis of legitimacy surrounding President Macapagal Arroyo could have been prevented had all Filipinos abided by his advice No. 8: "During elections, do your solemn duty."

Hope in the people

The advice is for everyone—from the election officials to voters, he said.

Lacson studied at the University of the Philippines College of Law and did postgraduate studies at Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

He is married to Pia, also a lawyer. They have four children, two boys and two girls. Their youngest is an adopted child, he said.

Five years ago, he and Pia seriously considered migrating to the United States or Canada when it seemed that the country was hopelessly mired in crisis after crisis.

The couple had a long discussion, and they realized that, yes, there was still hope, and it resided in the people.

Ngayon, hindi lang local ang tingi-tinging tawag, pati overseas na rin!

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OPINION

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Slim pickings

HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PROBLEM LIKE JOBLESSNESS among Filipinos of working age? Well, you don't. For the simple reason that there is no such problem. And that is according to Trade Secretary Peter Favila.

If Filipino workers and professionals would just accept the jobs that are there waiting to be filled, nobody would be complaining about unemployment, Favila said. "We have plenty of jobs available in the country today, but the problem is, some Filipinos are just *pihikan* or choosy," he explained. "Some Filipinos aspire to be the vice president immediately upon hiring or they want to be able to pick the time and place of work. Those who can't get what they want choose to just wait till their ideal job falls on their lap."

Now, who will dare dispute such an incisive and insightful analysis of the Philippine labor situation? Consider the more than 3,000 Filipino doctors who have found employment abroad in the last five years. They were so choosy that they rolled up their diplomas, went back to school and applied for employment as nurses. Nursing apparently is the apex of the medical profession in Favila's own estimation.

What about the teachers and other college graduates working in such places as Hong Kong, Singapore and Italy? They must have been so picky they settled for nothing less than their present jobs which require them to leave their homes and their own children to take care of the children of others, sometimes working 24/7 without relief.

And the workers who sneaked into Iraq and other war zones to find employment? They are so choosy they would rather work in places where they must risk life and limb and dodge bombs and bullets than in this country where they can sleep soundly and be close to their families.

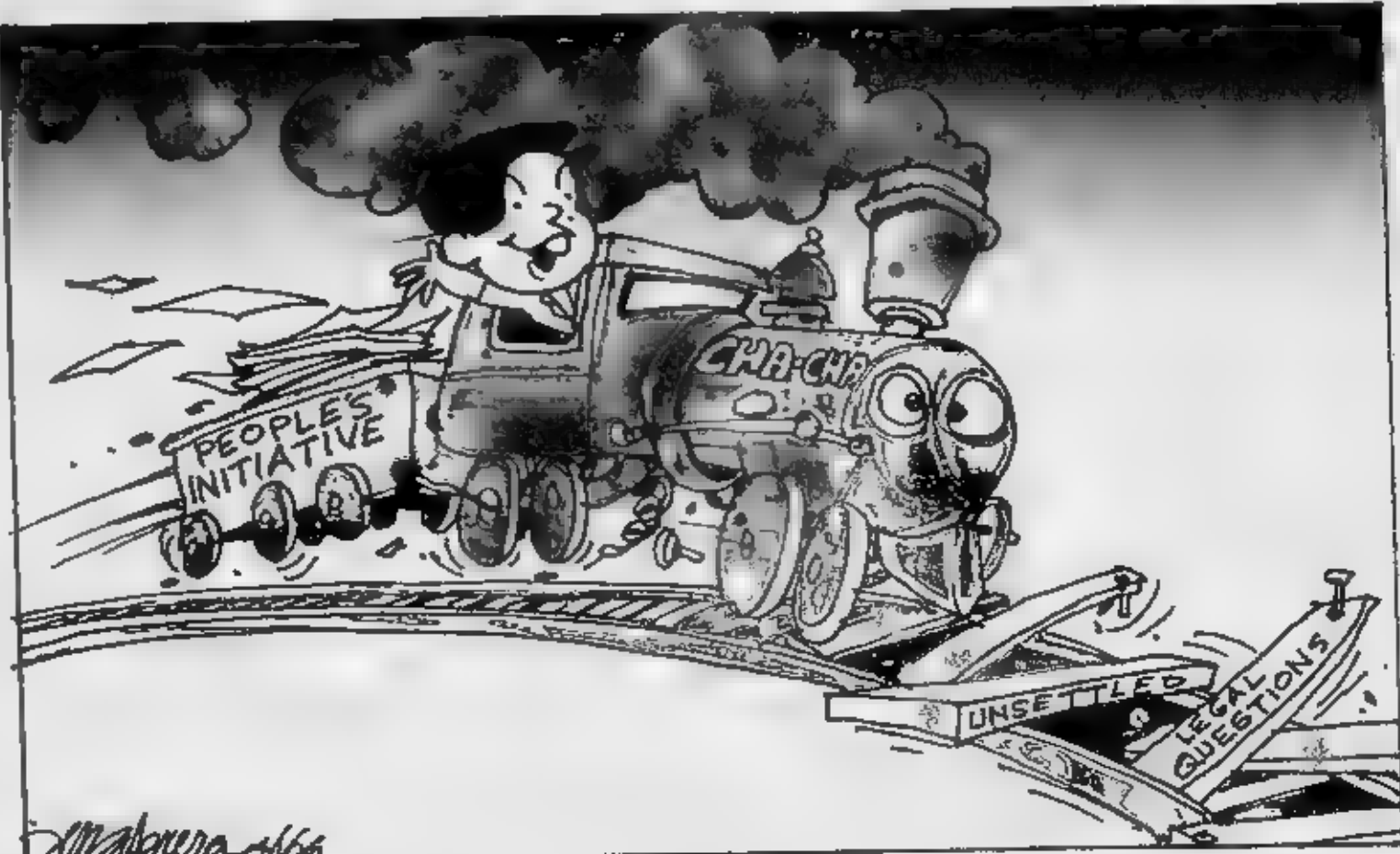
So choosy, in fact, are millions of Filipino workers that rather than work at jobs they don't like, they would go hungry and see their loved ones go hungry. That's the reason 17 percent or about one out of every six Filipinos experienced hunger this year, according to the latest surveys. And if that number has grown from 12 percent last year, Favila would probably say that's because misery loves company.

How many Filipinos are choosing blissful joblessness over distasteful work? According to the latest survey done by the National Statistics Office, there were 55,248,000 Filipinos of working age as of January this year. Of this number, 35,224,000 were either employed or looking for jobs, among whom 2.8 million couldn't find any. That's an unemployment rate of 8.1 percent, much higher than the 7.4 percent rate of joblessness just three months earlier, in October 2005. And that number would have swelled some more had not some 980,000 choosy workers hocked their farms and sold their carabaos so they could work for foreign employers during the whole of last year.

Among the 32.4 million Filipinos who were employed, 21.2 percent or 6.9 million were underemployed. That means that they either wanted to work full-time, get second jobs or move to other jobs that would pay better. Which in turn means they were merely hanging on to their jobs for lack of better ones. Not much choice for them obviously, contrary to what Favila says.

The grim reality is that the number of workers has been increasing faster than jobs are being created. While more than a million new workers joined the labor force last year, only 750,000 new jobs were created from January 2005 and January 2006. Out of this number, more than half or 389,000 were in the form of unpaid work for the family, mostly in agriculture, according to *INQUIRER* columnist Cielito Habito. The self-employed, numbering 263,000, made up the next biggest number of newly employed workers. All together, 87 percent of those who did find employment last year decided to work for themselves or for their families. And only 98,000 found jobs that came with regular wages or salaries, a mere 13 percent of new job openings filled last year. Very slim pickings, indeed, for Favila's picky jobless.

But if Favila were just half-serious about his job, he would be losing sleep over that last statistic. As Habito has pointed out, about half of existing jobs are occupied by salaried employees and wage earners. If 13 percent is the best that the economy can now generate, we will soon have a much bigger army of workers who work for their meals and little else or who don't have any work at all. And it will not be of their own free choice.



An unconstitutional initiative

SEPARATE
OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz



LAST YEAR, THE CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION supposedly conducted consultations with the people on the proposed changes to be made on the present Constitution. It had an initial fund of P10 million that it immediately protested as insufficient and was probably increased to accommodate the luxurious board and lodging of its itinerant members, not to mention their generous per diems and other allowances.

In fact, it was not a consultative body but was charged, albeit privately, to promote the parliamentary system publicly advocated by President Macapagal-Arroyo and Speaker Jose de Venecia who are both suspected of scheming to remain in power as President and Prime Minister respectively of the new government. Chair Jose Abueva is himself an active supporter of the proposed change, which undeniable fact alone refutes the pretense that the commission was an impartial body out to "consult" the people on their real sentiments about the contemplated changes.

After going all over the country on their expensive mission, the body rendered a report which, to nobody's surprise, overwhelmingly supported the views of Ms Arroyo, who had created it. Nobody paid attention to its recommendations except Malacañang and the House of Representatives, which especially salivated over the proposal to extend the term of its members until 2010. The rest of the nation simply dismissed it as another extravagant waste of public funds; many civic-minded citizens merely relied on the accounts of the media on the supposed accomplishments of the body. I am one of those who did not choose to waste their time reading its obsequious tripe.

At it again last week were the proponents of what is frivolously called the Cha-cha, which term alone suggests the triviality of the movement supposed to improve the supreme law of

the land. They started what they called a signature campaign designed to directly involve the masses in an initiative to revise the Constitution under its Article XVII, Sec. 2 that they have apparently not read carefully or are intending deliberately to misinterpret.

The Department of Interior and Local Government is leading the movement to persuade the people to support the changes suggested by the team of Arroyo & De Venecia to replace the system they have been misgoverning under the Constitution they would blame for their own shortcomings. Leyte Gov. Jericho Petilla has reportedly ordered the release of P3,000 to each of the more than 1,400 barangays in the province, for a total of not less than P4.2 million, to insure the success of the Cha-cha in their turf. And that's only one province.

Other local officials are likely to follow suit, if only to ingratiate themselves with Ms Gloria and again cause a tsunami of public funds by the hundreds of millions of pesos better used for more urgent purposes. These are to be wasted on the futile and foolish plan to revise the Constitution not by direct act of Congress or by a constitutional convention but by an unconstitutional initiative.

The Constitution may be changed under its Article XVII either by an amendment or a revision. The Commonwealth Charter simply spoke of amendments in a generic sense to include both piece-meal change and overall rewriting, but both the 1973 and 1987 Constitutions would make a distinction between

amendment and revision. Amendment as understood under such charters would refer to simple modifications, like changing the term of the President or the retirement age of judges. But a revision would be a revamp of the entire system of government like a replacement of the presidential with the parliamentary. It's like the difference between just changing the spark plugs of a car and overhauling its engine.

For the record, I dismissed the unconstitutional initiative not only in my book on Philippine Political Law but also in my several articles in this column, the last of which was on Jan. 21, 2006, where I wrote:

"The other allegedly available method is easily dismissible. The advocates of charter change are threatening to use as an irresistible alternative the right of the people to directly amend the Constitution through the initiative allowed under Art. XVII, Sec. 2 of the Constitution. The vote needed is only 12 percent of the total number of registered voters, of which every legislative district must be represented by at least 3 percent of its registered voters. They say they can easily observe these requirements."

"The premise is correct but its interpretation is erroneous. The Constitution may be revised or amended by Congress or a constitutional convention under Art. VII, Sec. 1, but only amendments, or piece-meal changes, may be effected by initiative under Sec. 2. The contemplated change of the government from presidential to parliamentary will involve a revision, not a mere amendment. It's like overhauling the entire engine compared to just repairing the alternator."

Even freshmen law students know the difference between an amendment and a revision and that a revision cannot be effected through an initiative. The dancers of the Cha-cha should be educated on this simple fact.

Brazen lies and karma

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod



NO ONE CAN SAY THAT GLORIA MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's statement—"this train has already left the station"—referring to Charter change, is an untruth. And Freudian slip or not, the metaphor reveals the strategy she and her cohorts in government have adopted to accomplish the change: railroading.

But there are brazen lies, alas, in her version of who is behind the move, and who are against the move. She said: "The true power of the people is being felt with the signature campaign to change our form of government. The old-time politicians of the status quo better stand back because this train has already left the station."

Come, Ms President, you know fully well that the signature campaign shows the mark of government forces and traditional politicians behind it. The victims of that "train" are the people who have so far been against Charter change, in general, and a parliamentary system, in particular.

Or to put it another way: That signature campaign has nothing to do with the people. It has to do with Jose de Venecia who—knowing he has not a snowball's chance in hell of being elected president—has been moving heaven and earth to change the rules of the game so his chances of leading the country are markedly improved. It has to do with the traditional politicians in Congress, who enjoy their power and want to increase it and perpetuate themselves in it.

And finally, it has to do with GMA herself who, if the Charter change is approved, can finish her term with her powers intact and without fear of impeachment. Why? Because the first section of the proposed new Article XVII, titled "Transitory Provisions," effectively ensures it: "The incumbent President and Vice President shall serve until the expiration of their term at noon on the thirtieth day of June 2010 and shall continue to exercise their full powers under the 1987 Constitution unless impeached by a vote of two-thirds of all the mem-

bers of the interim parliament." *Nota bene*: Under the present system, only one-third of the House of Representatives is sufficient—but it still failed—to impeach her. Another *nota bene*: no elections in 2007 (implied, because the interim parliament is composed of present legislators from both Houses, plus Cabinet members); no more term limits (explicit).

With such goodies for themselves, no wonder the tropas are prepared to go to any lengths, including riding roughshod over a Supreme Court decision and the people's sentiments, and lying through their teeth. To add insult to injury, they make use of government resources to accomplish their aims. The similarity with the Marcos regime is palpable, but unfortunately diminished in effect because the opposition has cried wolf so often that no one is listening to it.

Take the 1997 decision of the Supreme Court in *Santiago vs. Commission on Elections*: "This petition must then be granted, and the Comelec should be permanently enjoined from entertaining or taking cognizance of any petition for initiative on amendments to the Constitution until a sufficient law shall have been validly enacted to provide for the implementation of the system." Crystal clear, right? And even the justices who thought there was already a sufficient law (RA 6735) agreed that, in any case, people's initiatives covered only amendments (small changes) and not revisions (major changes).

Congress has not passed the required law, but its leadership is obviously supporting the "people's" initiative. Changing the form of gov-

ernment is by any definition a major, structural change, but the GMA train is passing it off as an "amendment." And the Abalos Comelec is certainly entertaining and taking cognizance of the initiative by saying that it can verify the signatures. Even without an enabling law? Defiance of the Supreme Court, right? What happened to the rule of law?

Let's look at the so-called "people's initiative." Most of the signatures were obtained during the semi-annual barangay assemblies on March 25. All over the Philippines, in all the assemblies, the petition forms/signature sheets were identical, the instruction sheets on how to get signatures were the same, and it was the barangay chairpersons who were in charge of getting signatures. Does that sound like a people's initiative, or a government initiative?

Finally, let's look at what the people think of the parliamentary versus the presidential system—the core issue in the "people's initiative." The advocates of the parliamentary system have made much of the latest Pulse Asia survey, which showed 43 percent of the respondents in favor of Charter change, against 48 percent not in favor. The difference is not statistically significant. See, they crow—people do want Charter change. And they stop there.

But Charter change can mean many things—federalism, economic liberalization, unicameral legislation, a parliamentary form of government. Since this "initiative" has to do with really one major change—from presidential to parliamentary, it is only right to know whether the people want a parliamentary system (not to mention "no elections" in 2007 and "no term limits" in perpetuity). The answer, as given in the October 2005 (released last December) and March 2006 surveys (to be released on Monday) of Pulse Asia, is a big fat "No."

This, in spite of the fact that JDV GMA and the tropas are selling Charter change as the answer to all our prayers and the solution to all our problems. They will get their comeuppance. Karma.

Freeing people's initiative

THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT BAR EXAMINATIONS have four of the Top 10 coming from schools other than the two fierce rivals UP and Ateneo. These are the University of Perpetual Help-Rizal, MLQ University, Far Eastern University and the Philippine Law School. The least known is the University of Perpetual Help, which produced the sixth placer. A few years back, the topnotcher came from a Baguio school, while another came from Cebu. It goes to show that landing in the Top 10 is not an exclusive feat of the top schools. What counts is the combination of brains, hard work and good study habits.

Among those who passed the bar were relatives of politicians, including topnotcher Joan de Venecia, niece of Speaker Jose de Venecia; Herdilia Alvarez, daughter of Heherson and Cecile Alvarez; and Eduardo Antonio Nachura Jr., son of Solicitor General Ed Nachura Sr. Herdilia fulfills the dreams of her dad, who was a few units away from a law degree at the UP College of Law (he went on to get an MBA from Harvard University while on exile). A few nights ago, I teased the Speaker at his stepdaughter Carissa Cruz's wedding about the heavy concentration of talent in his family. Trade Undersecretary Carissa belted songs together with singer Bimbo Cerrudo that showed the vast range of her powerful voice. JDV's son, Christopher, also sang. Now comes Joan topping the bar exams.

The Comelec came under fire from some politicians who said that verifying the signatures in the people's initiative could get it into legal trouble as that's tantamount to "entertaining" a petition for Charter change. This stems from the ruling of the Supreme Court in *Santiago v. Comelec* that RA 6735, the People's Initiative Act authored by the late Raul Roco, is insufficient. This fact has since been twisted, however, to say that the Comelec cannot have anything to do with those signatures at all. The misimpression heightened after Comelec Commissioner Romeo Brawner was quoted as saying it cannot act on the initiative even as Chair Benjamin Abalos was

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan



already saying it will verify the signatures.

Comelec director for education and information James Jimenez, in a letter to this column, pointed out that the Supreme Court ruling also states that prior to the filing of the petition, the Comelec can do several legal things: prescribe the petition's form; issue through its records office a certificate on the total number of registered voters in each district; assist, through its election registrars, the establishment of signature stations; and verify the signatures, using the voters' list. He said the verification of signatures is merely part of the process of preparing the petition, and it should not be mistaken for the petition itself. In fact, the SC has said, "Without the required signatures, the petition cannot be validly initiated."

What's emerging from this clarification and a closer examination of the decision penned by Justice Hilario Davide is that it's not as hostile to initiative as it seems. In the conclusion, the Court "permanently enjoined" the Comelec from entertaining any petition for initiative until a "sufficient law" shall have been validly enacted. But it also stressed that the initiative to propose constitutional amendments "should no longer be kept in the cold, it should be given flesh and blood, energy and strength." It said Congress "should not tarry any longer" in complying with this constitutional mandate.

It should also be pointed out that the voting on this issue was very close at 8-6, and after a motion for reconsideration, the decision became 7-7. This means recognition of RA 6735 as sufficient was just as strong as the view calling for a new en-

abling law. Why Congress has failed until now to pass a new enabling law is yet another argument for a shift to a unicameral legislature. Nine years after the SC asked it not to tarry, Congress still has not acted on this matter. A unicameral parliament would undoubtedly act much faster and in a more dynamic way.

The media have noted that among the original six jurists who voted against the decision on the people's initiative, two are still around: Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban and Associate Justice Reynato Puno. They both strongly asserted that RA 6735 was sufficient to serve as implementing law. This is one reason pro-initiative advocates are optimistic that the Court will reverse itself.

Panganiban's dissenting opinion, for instance, asserted that under the majority's "restrictive" view, the Constitution cannot be amended at all through an initiative as it will "effectively but unnecessarily curtail, nullify, abrogate and render inutile the people's right to change the basic laws." He said that at the very least, the majority holds the people's right "hostage to congressional discretion on whether to pass a new law to implement it, when there is already one existing at present (RA 6735), imperfect as it is." Panganiban found the majority position "all too sweeping and all too extremist," and likened it "to burning the whole house to exterminate the rats, and to killing the patient to relieve him of pain." He said initiative, like referendum and recall, is a "new and treasured feature" of the Philippine constitutional system and all three are "institutionalized legacies of the world-admired Edsa people power." He stressed that like elections and plebiscites, these are "hallowed expressions of popular sovereignty."

These points will be taken up and reviewed by the Court. But I submit that at the very least, the six or seven million signatures for initiative should shake the senators out of their selfish interest and move them to cooperate with the House in passing an enabling law that will pave the way for the exercise of the people's initiative.

Off to the barrio

I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR. I EVEN REMEMBER the exact time when I realized this. I was 5 years old and having a severe asthma attack. Despite my Dad's efforts to relieve me of my difficulty in breathing, it was only my pediatrician who actually succeeded after giving me salbutamol, of course. The next thing I knew, I was already in medical school studying to be a doctor.

When I enrolled I told myself that as soon as I got my license, I would join the Department of Health's Doctor to the Barrios Program. It never entered my mind to take the US medical licensure exams and practice medicine there. Up to now, in fact, I can't help but feel disappointed when I hear about doctors taking up nursing and using that as their passport to the land of milk and honey.

One of my friends who has been to the States a few times told me that I feel this way for several reasons. First, I have never been to the States and don't know what I am missing. Secondly, I have never worked in my whole life, until now at age 26, I still ask for allowance from my Dad. Lastly, she said, I have never worked my ass off for three years without being able to buy even just a used car because I earn just enough to get by. When I have experienced at least two of these, she predicted confidently, my decision will change.

Of course, my friend is right. I have never held a paying job in my entire life. But I have definitely worked, under training, for two years in two of the biggest public hospitals in this country. I go on a 24- and even 36-hour duty, holiday or no holiday, every three days for two years now without being paid any salary. Those are two of the three conditions she told me about, but my decision hasn't changed.

There are times when I fear that the time and effort that I invested in my medical education won't be repaid at all if I practice in this country. I begin to have doubts about my decision when my Dad tells me that I would be better off working abroad. But when I see a patient who doesn't even have P15 to buy a tablet that would lower his dangerously high blood pressure or when I look at a patient dying of breast cancer because her family doesn't have any money to pay for surgery, I am reassured that I am making the right decision. I may not be able to afford the comfortable life my colleagues are sure to have in other countries, but I know I am working where I am most needed. In a few months time, I will get my license. When that happens, I will be off to a barrio which needs my skill badly. With some luck, I may be assigned to a barrio by the beach. And that wouldn't be bad at all.

Che Zablan, 26, is a post-graduate medical intern at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center.

Journey's reward

Benjie Panabon

EVEN BEFORE OUR COLLEGE GRADUATION, MY TWIN brother and I were giving hints to our family that we wanted to join the Jesuit Volunteers Philippines (JVP). At the sound of the last three words, especially the one in the middle, our parents' jaws would drop. They would hear none of it, knowing that being a JVP does not only mean volunteer work but also doing it away from home for 10 months.

My brother and I would prompt argue passionately why we believed we should work as volunteers, while our parents kept insisting we should work for a fee or pursue higher studies. Moreover, they kept asking us what we stood to gain from "wasting our time" in such an endeavor. It was of course a trick question, because volunteering entails sharing and giving rather than gaining.

In the end, our parents gave in. They knew that we were old enough to make our own decisions, and that it was they in fact who taught us to be socially involved.

So two months after graduation, I was on a bus headed for Borongan, Eastern Samar, the place that would be my home for the next 10 months. With me were my area partners, Kris and Jackie, who were assigned to Lawaan to work as high school teachers.

Eight months have passed since that day I left for Borongan, and during that time I have experienced a life that is very different from the one I was accustomed to. It is a life of simplicity of making do with bare necessities and of constant struggle for social justice. My work requires me to be immersed in different sectors of the community, from women to farmers, and the experience has given me a bigger view of life outside the comforts of home.

I have heard Mano Nando, a leader on the island of Marikina, talk about the destructive effects of mining in their community. I have seen women working very hard to uplift the living condition of their families. I have witnessed an 18-year-old boy fight for dear life after he was shot several times by an uncle over a land dispute.

It is depressing to see the poor deprived of social justice, especially if the circumstances suggest that they are victims of oppression. But it is inspiring to see them remain hopeful amid the tribulations they face. Every smile they flash is a gift, every conversation with them is a prized moment and every handshake is a great honor.

My life as a volunteer in Borongan was not unlike my 28-hour bus ride from Manila. It has been a long and bumpy trip filled with a mix of emotions, mostly great enthusiasm and deep anxiety. But the memory of the long and tiring journey is blurred by the more pleasant images of a picturesque countryside, of kind people we meet along the way and the experience of seeing and doing new things.

What do we get for "wasting" one year of our lives in volunteer work? The answer is clear to those who have gone through the experience: The journey itself is the reward.

Benjie Panabon, 21, is assigned to the Catholic Social Services Center, the social arm of the Diocese of Borongan.

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Prostitution and American GIs

IN 2003, THE OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL in the US Department of Defense initiated a global assessment of "US military activities that promote and facilitate sex trafficking." The assessment was conducted in two phases, first in South Korea and then in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

In South Korea, which plays host to several American bases, "Courtesy Patrols" (a euphemism for military police or MPs) were found to be "friendly" with bar owners, employees and patrons, giving the impression that there was "official imprimatur" on activities in the clubs, including US military personnel paying "bar fines" so they could take out girls for a night.

The report on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo, according to an update issued by Equality Now, an organization that promotes women's human rights, found that "because there is no military standard that directly addresses patronization of prostitutes and other activities associated with human trafficking, criminal prosecution of these activities under military law is rendered more difficult. We believe that correcting these weaknesses is consistent with the abolitionist approach to trafficking in persons" or zero-tolerance policy with respect to US government employees and contractor personnel stationed abroad who engage in trafficking in persons set forth in the 2003 National Security Presidential Directive 22, which further states, "the United States Government opposes prostitution and any related activities."

The "zero-tolerance" policy was further reinforced in 2004, with a defense department memorandum stating, among other things, that the department "opposes prostitution and any related activities that may contribute to the phenomenon of trafficking in persons as inherently harmful and dehumanizing."

THAT same year, General LaPorte, the commander of the US Forces in Korea (USFK) testified before Congress and averred his command was implementing the zero-tolerance policy. Since January 2003, said the general, the USFK had ordered disciplinary action on five servicemen for soliciting (or patronizing)

AT LARGE

Rina Jinenez-David



prostitution, and prosecuted 398 servicemen for related offenses such as violating curfew and trespassing on off-limit establishments.

Last Oct. 14, US President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13387, amending the "Manual for Courts-Martial" to specifically list "patronizing a prostitute" as a violation of the Code of Military Justice. US military personnel will have committed an offense if they "compelled, induced, enticed or procured (a) person to engage in an act of sexual intercourse in exchange for monetary or other compensation."

But Equality Now's campaign for the implementation of a zero-tolerance policy continues. "The US military has not responded to repeated inquiries regarding any disciplinary action taken against US military personnel involving solicitation of prostitution," Equality Now reports. This, even as American soldiers continue to use women in prostitution in South Korea.

Recently, a Filipina bar worker won a judgment against a South Korean nightclub owner "for forcing her to have sex with US soldiers," Stars and Stripes, a US military newspaper, reported. Equality Now avers that "the failure of the US military effectively to enforce the law has been corroborated by women's organizations in South Korea."

MEANWHILE, reports Equality Now, the South Korean government has taken "significant measures" to combat trafficking and prostitution, but only after years of advocacy and lobbying by Korean NGOs, such as, the Korea Women's Association United (KWAU).

Laws enacted in 2004—the "Act on the Punishment of Procuring Prostitution and Associated

Acts" and the "Act on the Prevention of Prostitution and Protection of its Victims Thereof"—call for strict sanctions for trafficking and procuring prostitution. The second law also authorizes the establishment of assistance facilities and counseling centers, with an infrastructure of social, legal and medical support, for victims. "Under the new legislation," writes Equality Now, "victims of prostitution are defined as persons who are subject to various forms of coercion, including through drugs and debt, to sell sex. Victims of prostitution are not subject to punishment. Rather they are eligible for the assistance and counseling provided for in the law."

In the year since the laws have been passed, says Equality Now, the number of commercial sex establishments has decreased by 36.8 percent, according to figures provided by the Korean National Police Agency.

IN AN UPDATE sent to partners around the world (thanks to Annie Serrano of the Women and Gender Institute of Miriam College for passing it on to me), Equality Now calls on everyone concerned about the issue to write to President Bush "welcoming EO 13387, specifically enumerating 'patronizing a prostitute' as a violation," while urging Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld to strictly enforce this provision "noting that patronizing prostitution feeds the global demand for sex trafficking and noting reports that the law is not being effectively enforced."

Supporters are also urged to write South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun and Minister of Justice Jung Bae-chun "thanking them for the efforts to create a new legal framework that recognizes and protects victims of prostitution while holding those who exploit them accountable"; and urging them "to ensure that the new laws are strictly enforced."

And while you're at it, you might want to write to President Macapagal-Arroyo and Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez urging them to show stronger resolve to uphold the national interest—as well as that of the accused—in the Subic rape case.

Israel's new realism

WORLD VIEW

Barry Rubin



Strip unless or until there was a comprehensive peace agreement with the Palestinians and the Arab states. From a security standpoint, the occupied territories constituted critical terrain for defending Israel against an attack on its borders by Arab states' armies. Moreover, from a diplomatic standpoint, the territories were regarded as bargaining chips ("land for peace") to be used in achieving a negotiated solution. The Oslo agreement in 1993 and the ensuing peace process embodied that expectation.

The strategy ran aground in 2000, when Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered to give up almost all the occupied territories and accept a Palestinian state in exchange for real peace. The Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat turned him down flat and instead returned to a massive campaign of terrorism against Israel.

The entire Israeli political spectrum was thrown into confusion. The left had maintained that Arafat would make a deal and honor it; the right claimed that Arafat would make a deal and violate it. Everyone was wrong; there would be no deal to honor or violate. With the collapse of the strategy's most basic premises, what should Israel do?

Sharon formulated the answer in 2004, concluding that Israel did not need the territories. They were no good as bargaining chips because there was no one with whom to bargain. Neither could they be annexed to Israel, owing to the demographic problem implied by continued control over so many Palestinians. Finally, with the USSR gone and the United States the world's sole superpower, the geostrategic situation had changed en-

tirely. Arab states, preoccupied with other issues in the post-Cold War era, were less interested in the conflict, while the security situation in the territories themselves had become a problem.

Sharon's solution was unilateral withdrawal and the idea that Israel would decide on its own interim boundaries, with a view to what it would claim—if there was ever—a negotiated agreement. Moreover, Sharon now agreed that a security fence, which historically was favored by the Israeli left, would enhance Israel's defenses. The country would then focus on domestic issues such as economic development, improving its public institutions and raising living standards.

This approach appealed to the vast majority of Israelis, regardless of their political loyalties, and the victory in January's Palestinian election by Hamas, which extols terrorism and demands Israel's extinction, only reinforced the new strategic consensus. In fact, the new consensus is shared by most of Labor and the main opposition within Likud. The dream of peace, the nationalist fervor and the purported religious redemption that animated Israel's political combatants for a half-century are gone, replaced by a sense of resigned pragmatism.

That may inspire little enthusiasm, but the Israel that Olmert has now won a firm mandate to lead is by no means demoralized. On the contrary, public opinion polls show that citizens remain highly patriotic and optimistic about their personal lives. They have merely concluded that politics will not bring miracles, and that the most they can expect is to keep external threats to a minimum. That is Sharon's legacy. And, in Israel, fulfilling it will be no small achievement.

Project Syndicate

Barry Rubin is director of the Global Research in International Affairs (Gloria) Center of Israel's Interdisciplinary University and editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs (Meria). His latest book is "The Long War for Freedom: The Arab Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East."

Missing out on the best president

IN HIS MARCH 12 COLUMN titled "Ideals and betrayals," Randy David made a brief appraisal of the presidency in the last four decades. The years under review were presented chronologically: 1972, 1986, 1998 and 2001. They corresponded, respectively, to the rise of Ferdinand Marcos, Cory Aquino, Joseph Estrada and Gloria Macapaga-Arroyo.

What stood out and invited my curiosity was the glaring omission of the year 1992, when Fidel Ramos took his oath as president. It would have been very interesting to read the assessment made on

FVR's presidency by a respected sociologist and columnist like David.

In evaluating FVR's watch, writers like David and other historians would probably remember him as a minority President who managed to cobble together a coalition that helped push hundreds of economic reforms that leveled the playing field and liberalized the telecommunications, banking and transport industries. FVR might not have had enough time to reform the entire economy, but he certainly made it more efficient.

The environment for economic development was made fully pos-

sible because FVR settled disputes inside a fractious military and boldly launched peace talks with Muslim separatists and communist rebels. On top of these, he pushed for people empowerment and brought governance to the people by his weekly out of town Cabinet meetings.

The results were impressive. It restored the faith, belief and pride of Filipinos in themselves. By mid-1997, the country was looking up to become Asia's next tiger economy.

—ARTURO T. VALDEZ,
former DOTC secretary,
Makati City

Roco's 'sunshine principle' and youth's promise

THE SUNSHINE IN TODAY'S "speak" is transparency. And March, the month just passed, the month dedicated to women, reminded us of this as much as of Raul S. Roco, the man whose memory always reminds us of the dignity of women and the promise of the young. At 20, he wanted to change the world, at 30 his country, and at 60 himself. His one great guiding principle was that of the truth.

This explains Roco's espousal of the "sunshine principle," a phrase he used in his struggle for truth. Roco believed that truth was essential in a democracy. He said when the sun shines microbes die, but in the dark, corruption thrives.

As a senator, he dedicated his work to putting women on equal footing with men. He passed and supported laws, such as the Women in Nation Building Act, the Nursing Act, the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, the Anti-Rape Law, the Child and Family Courts Law. People think it was because of these laws that he was given the title "Honorary Woman." Maybe, but that moniker came about when, as congressman, he was

asked to speak before the Soroptimists. Until then, no man was allowed to talk before them. After listening to him, they made him an "Honorary Woman." In 1993, in the Senate, during a special day for women, Sen. Leticia Shahani, the presiding officer who had to leave to deliver a speech somewhere, yielded the chair to Roco whom she called the "Honorary Woman." The title stuck forever.

His hope in the young was not for the future. He said the "youth is the hope of today," not tomorrow, noting they were in Edsa I and II, not somewhere plotting the future. Roco believed that education must be made available to all, and that imparting knowledge does not diminish anyone but profits those who receive it. What a beautiful way of encouraging elders to guide the young.

Perhaps, the Filipino should take this signal from Roco and speak the truth, show the young a way to a better Philippines and exhort the women to get involved.

The private Roco behind the ever hardworking public servant

was as normal as anyone in a regular neighborhood. He doted on his dog and cared very much for his family (including his in-laws and the apog). There were the regular family eat-outs, going to the movies and excursions to Maog-mang Lugar (Happy Place), an Antipolo farm. He was not beyond going back to Ma Mon Luk to enjoy a special siopao and a bowl of steaming hot mami.

Roco was a deeply religious man. He would always be among the thousands of devotees honoring the Lady of Peñafrancia at the yearly fluvial parade in Naga City. He started all his meetings with a prayer, asking for enlightenment and guidance from above.

It's sad to think that this "regular" guy is no longer with us. But we can continue to take up his causes by emulating the principles he lived by. The change he dreamed of in his youth is still within our reach.

When will the next Raul Roco come?

—LYDIA CASTILLO,
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BF Homes, Parañaque City



Some lessons from the past

NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE, IN spite of his many victories in the battlefield, eventually met his Waterloo. After him came Mussolini and Hitler. Notwithstanding their vast military powers, they are now also gone, having "departed" quite ignominiously.

It is often said that those who do not learn from the mistakes of the past are bound to repeat them—with grimmer consequences. In 1946, reactionary members of the Philippine Congress prevented duly elected representatives belonging to the Democratic Alliance from assuming their posts. The incident fanned the Huk rebellion. It is one historical lesson that the President and her men should remember well. She who makes peaceful change impossible makes a violent option inevitable.

Another reminder for the President: Ruzal said through Platosopo Tasyo, "Not all are asleep in the darkest nights of our forefathers." We can also cite a common insight. One can beat a dog once or twice and it may just whimper in the corner. But if she beats it again, it will surely bite her in self-defense.

To borrow the question Cicero asked Catiline in old Rome, until when shall you test the limits of our patience, Madame President?

History is the President's best counsel and the best judge of her tenure. She should resign now and it may yet be kinder to her in the future. But if she persists in her petty tyranny, she too will depart in ignominy—sooner or later.

—ARCHIMEDES S. MARQUEZ,
420 Gov. A. Pascual St.,
Navotas, Metro Manila

Teaching Filipino and English in media

I'VE READ MICHAEL TAN'S COLUMN titled "Why, Filipino" (PDI, 3/13/06), and I agree with him.

Even though media and technology allow for instant communication, this doesn't mean that the language they use (or the information they give) is correct. There is no radio or television program that caters to the proper teaching of Filipino or English.

I've heard and seen programs in Japan, Germany, Saudi Arabia, even China. Not only do they teach their own dialects properly and ef-

fectively, they also immediately translate the dialects into English. If we look deeper, we can easily understand why knowledge of both languages are needed especially in teaching and learning technical and engineering lessons. In our case the ideas must be translated into English and Filipino.

I hope the Department of Education will conduct more research studies on this matter and provide more trainings for our educators.

—RICCI SANTIAGO,
sigmorell@coolcare.com.ph

Imprecise reference to '1984'

THIS APPEARED IN THE INQUIRER editorial last March 21: "1984" is a chilling portrayal of a totalitarian society. It was meant to be prophetic, and it came true in Stalin's Soviet Union, Hitler's Nazi Germany, Mao's China and Kim Il-sung's North Korea. It is happening in other countries now."

Orwell wrote "1984" in 1948 (published in 1949), well after the

downfall of Hitler's Nazi. Stalin's term of office started in 1924 and ended in 1953. The purges under Stalin's rule started even before the second great war or a decade before the book was written.

The book, therefore, is not prophetic insofar as the two cases are concerned.

—TONY BASA,
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A circle without a circumference

FIRST IT WAS THE DREAM of a strong republic. Then the invitation for Filipino expatriates to spend their retirement in the Philippines, an unnecessary invitation since any Filipino worth his brown skin always longs to return home. Then came the feigned, hypocritical, sorrowful repentance for the "lapse in judgment."

But after being saved by her lapdogs in the House of "unRepresentatives," Gloria Macapagal Arroyo has now become even more arrogant and belligerent. And now she claims to be the best leader of the land. Then, she claims that "it's the will of God" that she is the President of the strong (?) republic.

Frankly, I don't know which "god" Gloria refers to. All her ac-

tions and those of her minions are contradictory to the teachings of the God of the Bible, the God of the Koran and the God of the Talmuds. And no one needs a doctorate in economics or theology to see this.

But I think I know which god Gloria refers to. She refers to the god of 15th-century philosopher Nicolas of Cusa, who defined god as an imperceptible circle where the center is everywhere and the circumference is nowhere.

Poor Philippines. All things are centered on only one miserable human being. The other 84 million or so Filipinos are expendable. Can we do something about this anomaly?

—CECIL PERALTA,
ceperalt@hotmail.com

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Cebu mayors remove anti-PI masks

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—WHEN THE PRESIDENT SPEAKS, her allies in Cebu listen.

Bowing to the desire of President Macapagal-Arroyo, the Cebu Municipal Mayors League (CMMML) backed down of a plan to sign a manifesto opposing the use of people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

Dalaguete Mayor Ronald Alan Cesante, CMMML president, cited several reasons why they would no longer issue a manifesto, the

most important of which was that Ms Arroyo had declared her support for the people's initiative campaign.

Cesante said the planned manifesto is already "overtaken by events" because the President has spoken.

"The President had supported and endorsed the Charter change through the people's initiative, so it's anti-climactic if we would issue a manifesto against it," Cesante said.

Besides, Cesante said, "there is no material time for the mayors to come together and affix their signatures" on the manifesto.

Cesante also said that a number of barangays in many of Cebu's 48 towns have already gathered signatures for the people's initiative campaign.

Cesante added that since the message that they wanted to convey had been printed already in the newspapers, there was no longer any need for them to pass a manifesto.

But Cesante admitted that he got a call from the LMP national office because the league's national officials got worried when they read in the INQUIRER yesterday that the Cebu mayors are not going to support the people's initiative to amend the Constitution.

Cesante refused to identify who made the call, even as he insisted that he was not pressured to drop the plan to issue the manifesto.

Cesante also clarified that it had been his group's intention to continue supporting Ms Arroyo.

He said, however, that most of the mayors retreated from their earlier position when told that he got a call from the LMP.

Cesante has openly declared support for the people's initiative campaign but decided to support the position taken by majority of Cebu's mayors who, in a meeting Tuesday, decided to reject the scheme as they believed it was illegal and unconstitutional.

The manifesto was supposed to be drafted by Capitol consultant Pablo John Garcia, brother of Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, and provincial board member Victor Maambong.

Lawyer Garcia confirmed that Cesante called him yesterday and asked not to pursue the drafting of the manifesto.

The lawyer said he would abide by the decision of Cesante because he is the president of the mayors' league.

Garcia also clarified that his sister, Governor Garcia, did not say that she is opposed to the people's initiative, but wanted to distance herself from the campaign.

"Her position is that she will stay away from the process because precisely, it would defeat the purpose of a so-called people's initiative if politicians get involved," lawyer Garcia said.

Port in Quezon town dreams of making it big in transshipment

ALISON SY DREAMS OF MASSIVE cargo ships docking at her automated grain handling facility in Quezon province after it opens in May or June.

The grains port, the biggest of three such terminals in the country, has ambitions to become a transshipment hub in Asia.

Sy will be the first port operator to test this set-up for grains in Asia, traders said. Singapore and Hong Kong are classified as transshipment hubs for container cargo, they said.

Her terminal is a minuscule version of Rotterdam, Europe's busiest port, which handled 185 million tons of all types of cargo—from animal feed, coal and crude oil to soybeans, tapioca and vegetable oils—in the first half of 2005.

"My dream is to bring capesize ships into the country," Sy told Reuters as she leafed through shipping magazines at her office.

"If you order bigger ships to transport grain, it's cheaper. That's economies of scale," said Sy, whose family has been involved in local trading of rice and corn since 1969.

News that Sy's Nation Granary Inc. will open a P3.2 billion bulk terminal to accommodate ships holding more than 85,000 tons of grain created ripples in the market.

It also raised eyebrows as the facility lies in the sleepy town of Sanaya in Quezon province, where there is lack of infrastructure and communist rebels are active.

But Sy insisted her concept was

the future of the grains trade. "Capsize for grains is not for today. It's for the future. We expect 20 such ships to be coming on the grains market in 2007," she said.

Sy, chair and chief executive of Nation Granary, recently imported 33,000 tons of Chinese corn, 55,000 tons of Argentine wheat and 30,000 tons of Argentine soybean to test the unloader at her port.

They were the first grain imports for Sy, who also brings in liquid petroleum gas for the local market.

Traders said Nation Granary's new port will be busy handling imports for local consumption—even if it does not become a transshipment hub.

The country bought 1.8 million tons of rice last year. In a typical year, it imports up to 3 million tons of both milling and feed wheat, 1.5 million tons of soybean, 400,000 tons of soybeans and sometimes corn.

The Philippines does not grow wheat or soybeans.

Nation Granary will have a capacity of 225,000 tons.

Ric Pinca, vice president of the Philippine Association of Feed-millers Inc., said more grain ports would eventually reduce the cost of animal feed, bread, noodles, chicken and pork.

"All these developments should change the way the Philippines imports grain. As unloading becomes more efficient, our costs will be cheaper," Pinca said. "In the long run, this will be good for the country as this will reduce the cost of food."

Reuters



RESIDENTS with worried looks on their faces observe a raid on a suspected drug den in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

REM ZAMORA/POI PHOTO

Cops arrest 5 in raid on Cavite drug den

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Five persons, including four women, were arrested by agents of the Cavite police and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) in a raid on a drug den in an impoverished community in Dasmariñas, Cavite yesterday.

Supt. Mario Reyes, Dasmariñas police chief, identified those arrested as Normina, Jamalya and Norhisa, all surnamed Abdullah, Hadji Narunisa Didagan and Linda Ambaco.

Confiscated from them were 150 grams of suspected shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) worth P450,000, a 38 cal revolver and several drug paraphernalia.

Reyes said they released the Abdullahs after they were brought to the police station for questioning. He did not elaborate why the three were freed.

The two other suspects were brought to the PDEA-Caabarzon office at this camp, said PDEA regional director Supt. Raul Barga-meno.

Reyes said a team raided the house in Block 42 Lot 9, Barangay Datu Ismael at 8:30 a.m.

The raid was covered by a

search warrant issued by Cavite regional trial court Judge Norberto Quisumbing, he added.

Residents in the area and a nearby village tipped off the policemen about suspicious activities in the two-story concrete house which was in the middle of shanties of a Muslim community, Reyes said.

He, however, said the suspects were not included in the drug watch list of the local police station.

"Maybe the suspects were still new in their illicit business," Reyes told the INQUIRER in a mo-

bile phone interview.

Datu Ismael was the site of several anti-illegal drug raids in the past.

Two years ago, a PDEA operative was stabbed to death by a suspected drug pusher in a botched buy-bust operation in the same village. Despite the numerous police operations, several drug peddlers continue to operate in the area.

Reyes said they have sought the help of local officials to help them get rid of drug operators in the village. Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Corn processing plants planned in C. Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—The Department of Agriculture (DA) is setting up modern corn processing centers in Central Mindanao.

Being a major corn-producing region, the DA is putting up modern corn processing centers in strategic locations in Tacurong City, Malungon, Sarangani and in Kabacan, North Cotabato. The project will be managed and financed by the National Agribusiness Corp. (Nabcor).

Angelito Lim, Nabcor project manager, said the country has insufficient modern post-harvest processing facilities that would ensure production of premium quality corn.

"We want to establish corn processing center models that will produce quality corn here in Central Mindanao," he said.

Lim stressed the project will be carried out with the private sector and local government units. Edwin Fernandez and Aquiles Zonia, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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A16

Across the NATION

NBI, DENR feud over seizure of illegal logs from Isabel

BAYOMBONG, NUEVA VIZCAYA—Two government agencies here gave conflicting claims over the confiscation of Thursday of a truckload of lumber believed to have been illegally cut from the forests of Isabel.

Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation intercepted a 10-wheel truck carrying 13,000 board feet of lumber in Barangay Baretbet in Bagabag town after the shippers failed to show the required permits.

Lawyer Florencio Binalay Sr., chief of the NBI District office here, said the estimated P260,000 worth of tangle (Shorea polysperma) was an illegal shipment as it lacked cutting and shipping documents.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, however, said the shipment was covered by a complete set of permits.

Binalay said an informant told them that the truck was able to pass through the DENR checkpoint in Barangay Capirwan in Cordon, Isabel, near the Nueva Vizcaya-Isabela border.

He said the shipment was covered with an orange canvas and appeared like a cargo of palay (unhusked rice) from the outside. Upon inspection, NBI agents, however, discovered that sacks of rice husk were placed on top of the lumber, apparently to conceal the shipment.

Documents showed that the shipment was owned by Jose Carreon Sr. It came from Benito Soliven town in Isabel and was

supposed to be delivered to a construction firm in Calasiao, Pangasinan.

The shipping permit was issued by Celso Aresta, community environment officer of Naguilan, Isabel.

Roberto Apigo, provincial environment chief here, said Carreon acquired the lumber in an auction conducted by the Natura Resources Development Corp. (NRDC).

The NRDC is the corporate arm of the DENR that disposes of confiscated forest products through public auction, Apigo said.

Despite the DENR claim, Binalay said they were filing charges against Carreon and other people involved in the transport because the lumber neither

had a certification of its source nor an exemption from the total log ban issued by the DENR secretary.

Carreon said the shipment was legal.

"[The use of rice husk over the lumber] was to purposely mislead some people along the route, who pretend to be authorities and check our shipment and our papers. It is causing us much delay and leads to losses in our business," he said.

Binalay said the DENR would have to cooperate in the filing of charges to belie speculations that its personnel had a hand in the illegal transport of the lumber. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

GMA opens RP's 1st sanitary landfill

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—HER main reason for coming here was to inaugurate the country's first sanitary landfill here but when she talked to around 500 residents who waited for her, President Macapagal-Arroyo dished out something for the city's tourism industry.

"Tourism is where Puerto Princesa is special," she said.

The President said Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane has been instructed to turn over an initial P50 million for the road rehabilitation of Sabang.

Sabang, a site of Barangay Cabayugan, is the home of the World Heritage Site Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, which is famous for its hundred-year-old limestone cliffs and the underground river.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano accompanied the President during the visit, which was also highlighted by the inauguration of the more than 150-km north road of the province, leading from Puerto Princesa City to the town of Roxas in the northern part of the province.

Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn said the landfill, which is on a 26.9-hectare piece of land in Barangay Sta. Lourdes some 15 km from the city proper, is estimated to last for 30 years.

He added the idea for a landfill was conceived in 1992 when he first became mayor and the Asian Development Bank asked him to choose from several development projects.

This was before the enactment of RA 9003 into law requiring all local governments to set up sanitary landfills, Hagedorn said. *Gerald Tique, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



ELDE AGUIRRE/PDI MINDANAO BUREAU

INVESTIGATORS continue to pick up the pieces in the bombing of a bus in this Digos City terminal.

PNP, Digos City gov't offer P100,000 reward for bombers of bus in terminal

DIGOS CITY—THE PHILIPPINE National Police and the local government of this city yesterday offered a P100,000 reward for any information that would lead to the arrest of the bombers of a passenger bus here on Wednesday.

The police were treating the bombing, which wounded at least eight persons, as a case of extortion.

Yesterday, the police identified the syndicate that has been demanding P2.8 million from the owner of the bombed Weena Transit bus as "Urban Tiger Action Group."

The bandit group is allegedly led by a Commander Tiger, the police said in a statement.

Also yesterday, the police said a bus inspector employed by the Weena Transit, Jaime Quijano Jr., was shot dead on Thursday morning in Matalam town.

Quoting reports from investigators, police chief Director General Arturo Lomibao said an improvised explosive device made up of ammonium nitrate was placed in the rear of the bus.

It exploded some 10 seconds after the bomber disembarked at the Digos City terminal, the police chief said.

Abelardo Gamilla, Weena Bus operations manager, admitted that the firm has been receiving extortion letters and calls from unidentified persons.

Gamilla said the bus firm ignored these demands.

He said the threats were part of the risks in the transport industry operations.

Edgardo Valdez, Weena Bus Line owner, also said that prior to the bombing he received a phone call from an unidentified man demanding P2.8 million or else one of his buses would be set on fire.

Gamilla said the bus firm does not have sophisticated equipment that could detect the presence of volatile substances or explosives in the baggage of passengers. *Luige del Puerto in Manila and Eldie Aguirre, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Security at PMA graduation tightest ever

PORT DEL PILAR, BAGUIO CITY—The Philippine Military Academy operated its tightest security operation yet when its largest batch of cadets graduated last week.

Visitors and guests were not allowed to carry large bags or backpacks, and all cellular phones were electronically jammed as soon as they entered the PMA.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, the guest of honor and speaker, promoted all 324 members of PMA "Mandala" Class of 2006 to second lieutenants.

But the strict security guidelines were not due to continuing coup threats that were raised by Armed Forces chief of staff, Gen. Generoso Senga, earlier when he spoke to the Philippine Constitution Association, a PMA official said.

Air Force Capt. Dennis Soomon, PMA public information officer, said the measure was aimed at controlling the unusually big crowd that would be drawn here to witness the graduation rites.

Mandala members managed to keep their original number



CADETS go on a silent drill in preparation for their graduation last week that saw the PMA's tightest security preparations ever. *PDI PHOTO*

intact as they finished a four-year term of regimented training and advanced academic courses, according to Brig. Gen. Leopoldo Maligalig, PMA superintendent.

In fact, some members

broke other PMA records. Maligalig said one of the cadets completed a course in thermodynamics with perfect scores in all tests.

"Unukot ang aming puwet. (we are uneasy) This class is

twice the number of cadets we graduated in our history," Soomon said.

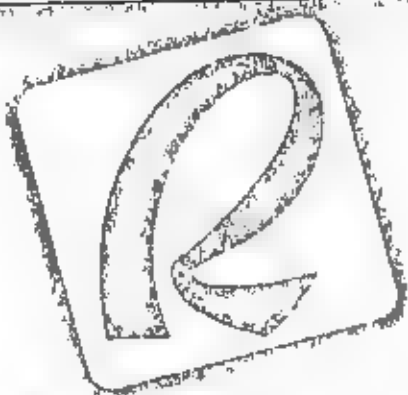
Even officials at the Presidential Mansion will need to deal with this "security nightmare."

Ms. Arroyo, who flies to the city today (Friday), has offered to tender dinner for all 324 cadets and their parents, according to coordinating officials from Malacanang.

"We actually don't know where to put [that huge] number at the Mansion. We are opting for heavy cocktails instead, but this is still a very large group, maybe the largest group of guests the Mansion will host," said a government official who is privy to the President's schedules at the Mansion.

All 324 cadets were in formation on the parade grounds during graduation, but only 76 of their parents and relatives were allowed to join them there, Soomon said.

Security personnel from PMA and the Presidential Security Group asked every visitor, including government officials, to register at the PMA gate. *Vincent Cabrera, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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INQUIRER *Visayas*Editor: Jun Sandayrol
Bureau Chief: Edralyn L. BeneducePower crisis
looms over PanayBy Hazel P. Villa
Iloilo City

AFTER ILOILO CITY'S TIF WITH ITS ELECTRIC power suppliers last year that had all sectors quaking in fear of a ruined economy, it is now the turn of the four provinces on Panay Island to face the grim prospect of power outages in 2007 and beyond, with no immediate long-term solution in sight.

If the government spent P620 million just to transfer the 10-year-old Pinamucan Power Plant in Batangas to Dingle, Iloilo to augment Panay's power supply, what is stopping it from making the plant fully functional?

This is the question that lawyer Romeo Gerochu and residents of far-flung areas on the island want answered in the face of 89 brownouts from July 6, 2005 to Feb. 2, 2006 that lasted anywhere from one hour to 11 hours.

The Pinamucan Power Plant that now goes by the name of Panay Diesel Power Plant 3 (PDPP 3) has an installed power capacity of 110 megawatts. It was transferred in 2003 to take over the 32-MW Power Barge 104, which was moved to Davao, and the 10-MW Pam-an Modular, whose lease was not renewed.

The controversial PDPP 3, however, cannot work to its fullest capacity because the National Power Corp. (Napocor) could only install units from the plant with a capacity of 80 MW and out of this, it can only supply consumers 30 MW since only three out of eight units are functional.

Of Napocor's four power stations and the Negros-Panay Submarine Transmission Line that all serve the island, it is PDPP 3 that has the highest installed capacity at 110 MW and the greatest possibility of solving any power crisis on the island that seats the provinces of Ilo-

ilo, Antique, Capiz and Aklan. That is, if it can make all its units run.

Whatever happens to Napocor does not affect Iloilo City because it is being supplied by Panay Power Corp.-Mirant from whence equally controversial Panay Electric Co. (Peco) has been getting its supply since 1999. The rest of Panay is served by Napocor.

Real or artificial problem?

Napocor claims that it has the situation under control with very few brownouts from mid-February up to mid-March. But it says it cannot look beyond 2006.

"The brownouts are just power interruptions because of low voltage from the transmission lines. The power supply is sufficient. The total power supply coming from all plants is 129 megawatts and the demand from the electric cooperatives is 118 to 120 megawatts," said engineer Nelson Jomena, plant manager of Napocor's Panay Diesel Plant based in Dingle.

Napocor in Panay has current power reserves of 11 MW, Jomena added, though he admitted that this was lower than the 13.2-percent minimum reserves required by the Grid Code.

Power outages also happen, he said, because of scheduled maintenance that requires a shutdown of some engines and technical problems arising from the submarine network that passes Cebu, Negros and Leyte. The line sup-

plies supplemental power to the Napocor sub-grid in Panay.

With Panay at the end of the network, it bears the brunt of any deficit that may occur in the supply.

Jomena explained that it was not easy to make the PDPP 3 fully functional in view of the many problems it faced even before it was shipped to Iloilo.

The plant was already 10 years old when it arrived and was not properly maintained by Enron that got into a contract with Napocor under a Build-Operate-Transfer scheme, he said. Napocor is now tasked with maintaining PDPP 3 that, according to him, needs a major overhaul.

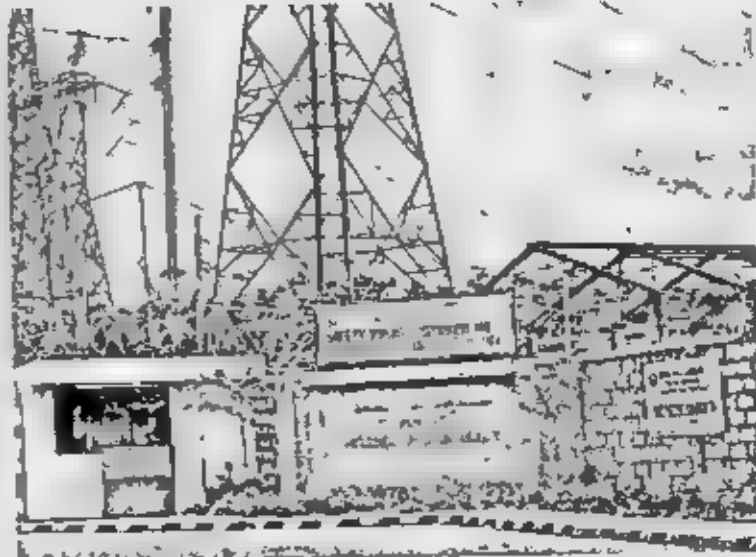
Since the repair will cost P20 million for each of the eight units or a total of P160 million, Napocor settled for minor maintenance for the three functional engines at P300,000.

"We are processing the request for the minor maintenance. The purpose is to make the units function like new but the money is difficult to come by," said Jomena.

Also, Napocor's four power stations and its Negros-Panay Submarine Transmission Line have a combined installed capacity of 213 MW but can cough up only 129 MW. Jomena again cites technical and maintenance problems.

The Napocor Visayas-Cebu office faxed a press release to the *Inquirer* on March 8, stating that by April, "two more Napocor generation units in the island will be coming in another 4.5 MW of PDPP 1 and 10 MW of PDPP 3. Furthermore, toward the month of June, an additional unit of PDPP 3 will be running to bring to 70 MW the total capacity of the Pinamucan units."

"The return of Power Barge 103 and additional operational units of PDPP 1 and 3 will make the power supply, as far as the



DO WE have sufficient power in 2007? The National Power Corp. in Dingle has the answers to this serious question bugging residents of Panay island who are starting to get restive over another possible power crisis.

HAZEL P. VILLA

generation side is concerned, already self-sufficient in Panay Island," it read.

Unhappy with Napocor

But not everyone is satisfied with Napocor's efforts to "solve" the power crisis on the island.

For Gerochu, who is fresh from last year's victory over Peco that forced it to reduce its generation charge to P2 per kilowatt-hour, there is no power shortage in Panay and what we may have is an "artificial power shortage."

"There is a small demand for power in Panay. Napocor is negligent in its obligation. They are taking their time because the moment the Pinamucan Power Plant (PDPP 3) works, there would be an excess of power. What is happening is they are creating a scenario that would give an opportunity for Mirant to put up business in Panay," said Gerochu in a telephone interview.

He said Napocor had to make the

elsewhere.

Private sector offers

With Napocor due for privatization, Jomena said its only mandate was to operate existing plants and not build new ones.

"I don't know anything about offers to help rehabilitate our plants. The Napocor leadership can speak on that. We can't say anything about what is to happen in 2007. We are facing only 2006," said Jomena.

Alto Power Management Corp., a private power company, however, claimed that it had submitted an "unsolicited proposal to undertake the rehabilitation of PDPP 3" to Napocor president Cyril del Callar in January.

Cito Santillan, executive vice president of Alto Power, said the actual expenses for major maintenance of PDPP 3 was P900 million and not P160 million as claimed by Napocor. His company, he said, was willing to undertake the rehabilitation and Napocor can pay them within 10 years.

"P200 million a year can be taken out of the fuel savings, guaranteeing that PDPP 3 consumes 210 grams per kilowatt-hour after we have rehabilitated it. Napocor can pay us half of what they owe through the fuel savings," said Santillan.

He added that the Alto Power offer would not require any new budget allocation from Napocor but rather, a budget reallocation from fuel to rehabilitation costs.

In its proposal to Del Callar, Alto Power said it could complete rehabilitation of PDPP 3 within eight months from the notice to proceed.

With Napocor not able to look beyond 2006, all options are open to avert a Panay power crisis that hovers between artificial and real.

Remembering Iloilo's 'Candyman'

By Alex Pal
Iloilo City

TO AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS AROUND the world, he was known by his call sign DU6CO with the handle "Teg." He got his call sign long ago when hams were so few that they could afford the luxury of registering their initials.

I knew him as "Uncle To" since I married his niece Irma. But to many children and grownups in his neighborhood of South Baluarte in Molo District in Iloilo City, Canuto B. Ortega was fondly known as "The Candyman."

No, he wasn't born with that nickname—he earned it through the years with his knack for giving candies to children.

"He never ran out of candies. His pockets were so full of them whenever he left the house," his daughter Rachel Scott, the youngest of 12, told us.

The Candyman usually gave out Tarzan bubble gum to the kids.

But it was not just giving candy that endeared him to the children the most. It was the way he gave them. He would usually reach be-

hind the kids and say, "Hey, what is this?" and—tadaah!—he would be holding a candy in his hand, leaving the young ones bewildered.

Uncle To started buying lots of candies to hand over to other kids, even adults, after he stopped smoking in the early 1980s.

Irma said that as a kid, she remembered Uncle To pulling candies out of their pockets, ears, or armpits. "He stuck me as a magician back then."

"No, it wasn't magic," said his son Rafael, an architect. "It was simply a matter of having the candy buried in his palm beforehand, but perhaps the poor kids loved the attention which they didn't get from other people around them."

Rafael's eyes started to fill with tears as he recounted those morn-



THE YOUNG Canuto Ortega, who was fond of giving away candies, must have been how he was remembered by many children in his neighborhood in Molo District in Iloilo City.

for his father by their gate, bend over, and dare The Candyman to pull out the candies, a challenge which Uncle To willingly obliged.

Unsuspecting 'victims'

He didn't stop there. He would pull candies from out of the pockets of surprised policemen, nurs-



CANUTO Ortega, who died at 92 last week, will always be remembered as Iloilo City's "Candyman." CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

es and other unsuspecting people in the streets of Iloilo.

He did it so often at the hospital when he would go every now and then for treatment that his daughter Rita once became too embarrassed, she asked him to slow it down.

Slowed it down he did, but not for long for he would soon be back

doing what would never fail to bring a smile on his face. And on those he gave candies to.

Two years ago, Uncle To had a bad fall, forcing him to limit his movements. That was when the children started to miss him.

"Way na gali kita candy (So

we won't be having candies anymore)," Rafael recounted the neighborhood youngsters as saying upon hearing the news.

Many of them are grown up now. One drives a taxi, which Rafael took one day. When the driver dropped Rafael off, the driver recognized his old neighborhood and told Rafael, "There's no old man here who gives candies. I remember he always gave me some when I was a kid!"

"That was my father. He can't do it anymore," Rafael

told the man.

Two weeks ago, Uncle To passed away at the age of 92. He looked so serene; near his coffin was a picture showing him with a subdued smile. It was the smile that I'm sure many children must have seen just before a candy was forthcoming.

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9 suspected drug dealers arrested in Tondo

By Margaux C. Ortiz

NINE SUSPECTED DRUG PEDDLERS were arrested during a police operation in Barrio Magsaysay, Tondo, Manila, notoriously known as Barrio Bato (street slang for shabu or metamphetamine hy-

9 SUSPECTED/A20

WHAT'S INSIDE



Japanese engineers inspect collapsed ceiling at Naia

/A20

Suspected kidnap gang head nabbed

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE LEADER OF A NOTORIOUS kidnap-for-ransom group, who allegedly masterminded a string of kidnappings in Metro Manila, was arrested by agents of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) in Tagkawayan, Quezon on Wednesday.

Ariel Año, 42, a native of Camarines Norte, sustained two

gunshot wounds in his left leg and was taken to the Philippine General Hospital for treatment, according to NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Ruel Lasala.

Lasala said the NBI agents, assisted by members of the Philippine Army, were forced to shoot the suspect when the latter fired upon his pursuers with a .357 revolver.

Lasala added that Año, who

SUSPECTED/A20

Makati kagawad's slay: Political rivalry or mistaken identity?

/A20

ON TARGET



Ramon Tulfo

Karma visits Luisita

/A20

Muntinlupa offers free sports clinic, classes for summer

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Political rivalry, or mistaken identity?

By Tarra V. Quismundo

WAS HE A VICTIM OF POLITICAL RIVALRY, or was it a case of mistaken identity?

Police were considering both angles in the case of former barangay councilor Edilmar Pancipane, who was shot dead by three unidentified men at the corner of H. Santos and J.E. Rizal streets in Barangay Tejeros, Makati City, on Wednesday.

"It may be because of politics. He was being recommended to replace a barangay kagawad (council member) who was also killed last year. Then again, based on the style of the shooting, it looked like the work of the Alex Boncayao Brigade or the NPA (New People's Army) because it happened on the anniversary of the NPA's founding," said Makati Police Department chief Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio.

"But if it's the NPA, it could be a case of mistaken identity because there's no reason for him to be liquidated by the NPA," Valerio told the INQUIRER.

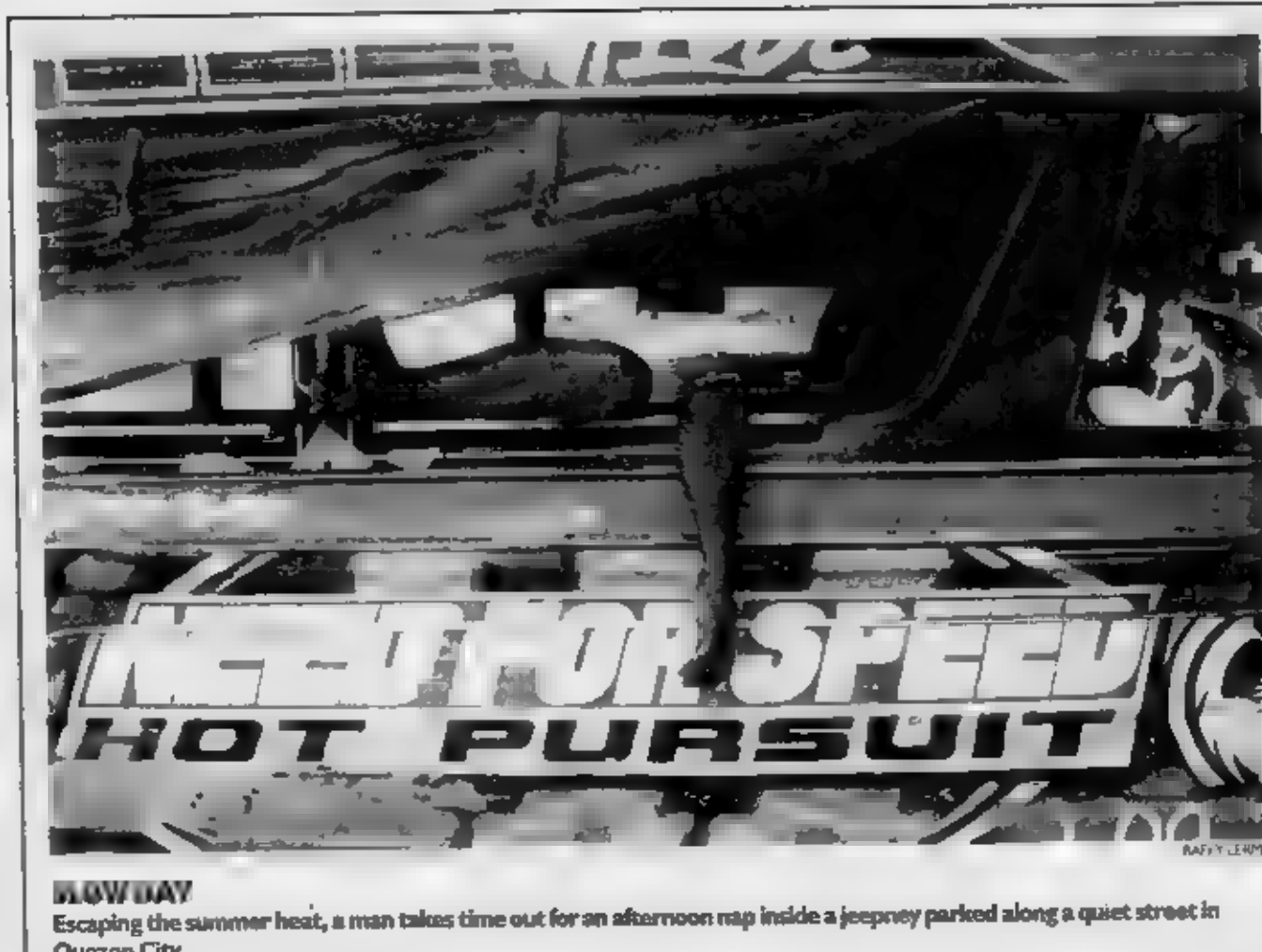
Pancipane, 35, a political ally of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, lost when he ran for reelection in the 2002 barangay polls, landing 8th among contenders for the post of kagawad in Barangay Rizal.

Barangay councils only have seven slots for the position.

"All that was needed was the approval of the City Council," said Barangay Rizal secretary Marietta Montes.

Pancipane was recommended to replace Salvador Torrente who was shot dead last year by four men in front of his house. Torrente's slay has remained unsolved.

Valerio said a background check showed that Pancipane was a good citizen who did not have enemies.



HOWDAY

Escaping the summer heat, a man takes time out for an afternoon nap inside a jeepney parked along a quiet street in Quezon City.

He had served as chair of the Sangguniang Kabataan before running for a seat in the barangay council.

"He was a law-abiding citizen. I haven't come across any report that he had caused harm to anyone. He also has no records of involvement in illegal drugs. He was a good man," Valerio added.

"He was very friendly. He had no enemies, that's why we were shocked when we learned about what happened to him," Montes added.

Valerio said police already had artist's sketches of the three gunmen, all of whom were unfamiliar faces in the crowded commercial area where the shooting happened.

The police chief withheld details about the suspects' features for the meantime to avoid bungling manhunt operations.

"The witnesses said they heard the suspects asking about Pancipane a week before the shooting. None of them covered their faces," Valerio said.

Binay raps Transco for 'scare tactics'

By Tarra V. Quismundo

MAKATI MAYOR JEJOMAR BINAY yesterday criticized the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) for resorting to what he called "scare tactics," following the Supreme Court's order to shut down key power transmission lines south of Metro Manila.

"We vehemently object to these scare tactics, which are apparently intended to cloud over the issue of serious health risks posed to residents of Dasmarinas Village by the proximity of high voltage transmission lines to their homes," Binay said in a statement.

Transco president Alan Ortiz earlier warned that the shutdown and relocation of the 230-kilovolt Sucat-Araneta-Balintawak transmission line, a key link to the electricity supply of Luzon, would affect power supply to vital installations and certain parts of southern Metro Manila.

The blackout warning was nothing but Transco's "scare tactics," said the mayor, whose constituents in the posh village had complained that the high-voltage pylons would put them at risk from radiation.

The residents filed a suit in a Makati Regional Trial Court in 2000 to ask that the project be stopped.

The court ruled in their favor as it ordered the National Power Corp. to stop transmitting power through the power lines that run from Sucat in Parañaque to Araneta Avenue in Quezon City.

Free sports clinic in Muntinlupa

By Jocelyn R. Uy

TO KEEP THEM BUSY THIS SUMMER, the Muntinlupa City government is offering free workshops to persons aged 10 and upwards.

Being offered are free lessons for people aged 10 to 21 who want to develop their artistic skills like singing, dancing and painting. Tez Navarro, the city's public information head, said yesterday.

For children aged 7 to 12 who are interested in sports, the city government, in coordination with the Philippine Sports Commission, will be holding a sports clinic on taekwondo, judo, karate-do, gymnastics, basketball and chess.

Those who want to sign up for the free workshops can go beginning on Monday to the city's Youth Affairs and Sports Development Office near City Hall.

Registration time is from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday. The free workshops will run from May 5 to 31.

Meanwhile, the city's Early Childhood Education Division, in coordination with some youth organizations from different barangays, will also be conducting tutorials for preschoolers this summer.

The free tutorials, aimed at improving the reading, writing and math skills of some 1,000 children, will be held in the city's 82 daycare centers starting on April 19, Navarro said.

Firm seeks RTC mediation on airport project

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE ORIGINAL PROPONENT OF THE controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 3 has asked a lower court to suspend the expropriation proceedings on the project.

Asia's Emerging Dragon Corp. filed a motion for intervention in the Pasig City Regional Trial Court Branch 117 on Thursday, in which it asked the court to order the suspension of the proceedings until the company is "impleaded" in the case.

"AEDC has a legal interest in the subject of the controversy and stands to be directly injured by the outcome of the expropriation proceedings," said the firm's lawyer, Perfecto Yasay.

Yasay added that it was "imperative" for AEDC to be included in the case so that "it can demonstrate through competent evidence that Piarco does not deserve or is, otherwise, not entitled to the payment of P3 billion."

Established in 1993, AEDC is owned by business tycoon Lucio Tan.

During the Ramos administration, the consortium submitted an unsolicited offer of \$300 million to build and operate Naia 3. But when the project was submitted to a Swiss challenge, the government said that the Philippine International Air Terminals Co. Inc. (Piarco) had submitted a better offer.

Under a Swiss challenge, a deal is subjected to counteroffers to see if the original offer was reasonable.

After ceiling collapse, all's quiet at Naia front

By Nikko Dizon

YESTERDAY WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE been the much-anticipated "test run" of the controversial Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminal 3.

Instead, everything remained quiet at the huge airport facility.

The only distinguishable sounds came from the Northwest arrival area—particularly at exit A-2—where a small group of airport officials and engineers were inspecting the gaping hole created by the collapse of a portion of the terminal's ceiling last Monday.

Four engineers from Takenaka Corp., the Japanese contractor that built the Naia 3, had arrived during the week, and were at the airport to inspect the facility.

"Please don't take photos. This is very important," Hiroyuki Yamamoto, Takenaka construction manager, requested photojournalists.

Two of his engineers, wearing yellow hard hats and safety belts, were on a crane, taking snapshots of every portion of the damaged ceiling.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa), said the investigation into Monday's incident was "very complex."

"We're asking them (Takenaka) to explain the cause of the collapse," Cusi told reporters after he inspected the site.

He added that Takenaka, which he described as a "reputable" Japanese firm that does "thorough work," would also look into the possibility of sabotage.

"The incident was a big blow to their reputation," Cusi said. "As the builder, they have to prove that the terminal is safe all over."

Apart from Takenaka, two ranking officials of the Association of Structural Engineers of the Philippines (Asep) were at the Naia 3 to conduct an inspection as requested by Miaa.

"It's possible that there is a defect that's why the ceiling collapsed," Joseph Manalo, Asep secretary, told reporters.

"But it's not easy to determine the cause. There are lots of details to be considered," he added.

9 suspected drug...

From page A19

drochloride), yesterday morning.

The suspects were identified as Wilfredo Zarraga, Violeta Baranuelo, Crisanto Perez, Joemel Ignacio, and Albert Baratang, all residents of Cristobal Street in Tondo; Carlo Jimenez and Roger dela Cruz, of Sevilla Extension, Tondo; Francisco Nolasco and Ronald Carpio, of Abad Santos St., Tondo.

Operatives of the Manila Police District's (MPD) District Anti-Illegal Drugs Special Operations Task Group seized 14 sachets containing suspected shabu from Zarraga and his companions.



CONSTRUCTION engineers from Takenaka Corp., the Japanese firm that built the Naia terminal 3, inspect a portion of ceiling that collapsed earlier this week.

JES VUSON

But Manalo said "sabotage may be ruled out."

Cusi described the incident as a "big setback" for the government.

"We have to inspect the entire building and we don't know how long the rectification work would be," he said.

Three low-cost airlines were set to participate in the Naia 3 test run, he said. These were Cebu Pacific, Air Philippines, and Jet Star Asia.

Nevertheless, he said that TOGI, the private consultancy firm hired by Miaa to inspect the airport terminal long before the incident happened, had said that the Naia 3 was "structurally safe to use."

Cusi had suspended the test run indefinitely pending the results of the investigation and the inspection of the airport terminal.

The opening of the Naia 3 had been delayed several times, primarily because of the legal issues hounding it.

Described as a state-of-the-art airport facility, Naia 3 has been mothballed for the past five years.

PO2 Julieto Malindog of the MPD DAJD-SOTG said shabu peddling was rampant in the area, especially on Cristobal Street where the operation took place. "The peddlers would flock to potential customers like vendors selling candies," he said.

PO2 Marlon San Pedro said the police placed the area under surveillance for two weeks prior to the operation.

Last week, the Manila police also discovered a flourishing drug den in Frater Street in Quiapo, Manila.

A total of P7.5 million worth of shabu was seized during the raid.

Suspected kidnap

From page A19

was serving a 10-year sentence for robbery in hand before he escaped in 2004, would be turned over to the New Bulid Prisons in Muntinlupa City.

NBI NCR executive officer Ferdinand Lavin said that before Año was arrested in 2001, he led a criminal group which specialized in kidnap-for-ransom operations in Metro Manila.

Lavin said Año, who named his group after himself, allegedly masterminded the abduction of Singaporean Benedict Leong and Hong Kong national Judy Chan in Binondo, Manila on April 26, 2001.

Leong and Chan were released at the Guigunto Exit in Bulacan after their relatives paid the P7 million ransom.

"The Ariel Año KFR Group would kidnap their victims in Metro Manila and hold the payoffs in Bulacan," Lavin said in a phone interview.

Another victim, Jocelyn Cabrera, was kidnapped in Novaliches, Quezon City on May 11, 2001 and released in Guigunto

after paying the suspects P2 million.

Miguel Siscar, a third victim who was abducted in the metropolis, was also released after paying P1 million, Lavin added.

When Año escaped from his NBP guards after a court hearing in Quezon, he formed another armed robbery group which allegedly targeted residents in the Southern Tagalog region.

Lasala said Año used another name, Rucky de Lara, for his criminal activities.

Año and his family were able to elude authorities when the Philippine National Police raided two of their safe houses in San Pablo, Laguna in November 2004.

Lasala said the suspect fled to Barangay Casipalan, Tagkawayan, Quezon and lived there with his family until his arrest.

"Año was allegedly forming another kidnap-for-ransom group in the area," the NBI official said, adding that they had received intelligence reports about the suspect's plan to stage another kidnapping.

Karma visits Hacienda Luisita

THE OMBUDSMAN SCORED A NEW against corruption when it dismissed from the service Davao Oriental Provincial Board Member Maria Consuelo "Bambi" Palma Gil for dishonesty and grave misconduct. The anti-graft body found that Palma Gil falsified daily time records and accomplishment reports to make it appear that "ghost" or non-existent employees rendered work at the provincial government's offices.

There are many Palma Gils in various provincial, city and municipal government offices. All local government units—without exception—have their own ghost employees, people who report for work only during payday. They're called the "15-30" workers. The problem with Palma Gil is that she let herself get caught.

The new Ombudsman, Ma. Mercedes N. Gutierrez, is a no-nonsense, fast-acting graft-buster. The decision to dismiss Board Member Palma Gil, daughter of Davao Oriental Gov. Ma. Elena T. Palma Gil, was penned by the Office of the Ombudsman-Mindanao on Nov. 13,

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



2003. But resigned Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo sat on the decision for reasons only he knew. It took Marcelo's replacement, a woman, to sign the implementing order dismissing the provincial board member. The order was signed March 13, 2006. In the next couple of months, we'll see more corrupt government officials and employees getting dismissed, suspended or charged before the Sandiganbayan. Ombudsman Gutierrez has the "balls" to let the axe fall where it should. Hurray for Ms. Gutierrez!

At last, the 4,915-hectare Hacienda Luisita, seat of "aristocracy" in Central Luzon, will soon be subdivided among 4,000 farmers who have been tilling it for many years. The Department of Agrarian Reform has identified the farmers who will be entitled to a piece of land

of the hacienda owned by the family of former President Cory Aquino. The government's decision to divide Hacienda Luisita under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) has gotten the goat of Tita Cory. She has joined the opposition in demanding the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo. But people don't take her seriously because they know she's doing it out of spite.

The CARP during the Aquino administration was a big joke because Hacienda Luisita was not divided among the farmers. The program calls for the transfer of big agricultural estates to farmers tilling them. Hacienda Luisita was not included, in deference to Ms. Aquino.

Now, it can be told: Bacolor, Pampanga went under lahar and was nearly erased from the map because government engineers diverted the lahar flow to the town to save Luisita. A reliable source told me Luisita was on the path of rampaging lahar and would have gone under, if not for that move. Visayans have an apt description of what is now happening to Luisita: "Gigabaan" (karma).

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2006

Bill seen making millions of illegals US citizens

WASHINGTON—KEY SENATORS said on Thursday they were optimistic more majority Republicans will back a major overhaul of US immigration law that would give millions of illegal aliens a chance to become citizens as well as tighten border security.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chair Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania and Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina told reporters they thought many of their fellow Republicans would back the comprehensive immigration bill being debated by the Senate.

"Among the Republican conference, I see a shift toward a comprehensive view to solve this problem," said Graham, one of a handful of Republicans backing the bipartisan bill approved by the Judiciary Committee earlier this week. "From a Republican point of view, we need to be wise in the way we deal with this politically."

The Senate is debating the bill that toughens workplace enforcement on illegals and tightens the border and also creates a new guest worker program pushed by President George W. Bush. The bill pro-

vides a way for temporary workers as well as illegal immigrants to eventually become US citizens.

Many Republican opponents call that amnesty and instead prefer legislation focusing on border security and enforcement.

That approach was taken by the US House of Representatives, which passed a bill last December defining illegal aliens as felons and calling for the construction of a 1,120-km fence along the US-Mexico border.

The House bill has sparked a fury of protests across the country by the Hispanic community and opposition of groups as diverse as the US Chamber of Commerce and the Catholic Church.

House Speaker Dennis Hastert on Wednesday suggested the House would be open to a temporary worker program when the House and the Senate later work out their differences. Specter said it was a hopeful sign that lawmakers would accept a comprehensive approach.

"I think as time passes, there's a greater realization that you could not settle for just an en-

forcement bill but have to have a broader bill to deal with the 11 million (illegal immigrants)," Specter said.

Backers of Senate's comprehensive reform bill say forcing millions of immigrants to leave the country would be unwork-

able and hurt the economy. A Pew Research Center and Pew Hispanic Center poll released on Thursday showed

Americans were concerned about immigration and a growing number believed they harm the country. Reuters



NECKLACE FOR THE BRIDE

A Jordanian model displays a gold necklace at a wedding show in the Jordanian capital of Amman March 30. Over 50 exhibitors from the Arab world participate in the show. Reuters

Sierra Leone court wants to try Taylor in The Hague

FREETOWN—A UN-BACKED war crimes court wants to shift the trial of ex-Liberian President and feared warlord Charles Taylor to the Netherlands because of security concerns, it said on Thursday.

Taylor, 58, was flown in handcuffs to Sierra Leone on Wednesday to face 11 counts of war crimes at the UN-backed court stemming from Sierra Leone's 1991-2002 civil war.

Charges against him include mutilations and sexual slavery.

He is also accused of receiving diamonds to support Sierra Leone rebels who often hacked off limbs or raped their victims.

Taylor will be the first former African president to appear before an international court when his in-

tial hearing is held in Freetown on Monday or Tuesday, a court official said. It was earlier announced for Friday but was later put back.

Taylor will be asked how he pleads to the charges.

Court President Justice A. Raja N. Fernando wants the trial switched to The Hague, where it could use the modern facilities of the new International Criminal Court (ICC).

The request cited fears the trial of Taylor, who still has supporters in neighboring Liberia, could provoke unrest in both of the small and war-ravaged west African states.

Court chief prosecutor Desmond de Silva stressed it was just a change of venue and it would "be the Special Court for Sierra Leone sitting in The Hague." Reuters

WORLD BRIEFS

Bomb attack kills 3 Israelis

JERUSALEM—A Palestinian suicide bomber killed three Israelis outside a Jewish settlement in the northern West Bank late Thursday in the first deadly attack since Israel's national election. The blast came as acting premier Ehud Olmert voiced fears that awkward negotiations lay ahead to form a government to fix Israel's final borders. The bomber riding in a car blew himself up after spotting a religious Jew near the Kadumim settlement, witnesses said. Two Israeli women and one man died in the blast, the sources said. AFP

38 dead in Iran quakes

TEHRAN—Two strong earthquakes followed by several aftershocks jolted western Iran early Friday, killing at least 38 and injuring hundreds, state media reported. The quake had a preliminary magnitude of 5.1 and struck Boroujerd and Doroud two industrial cities in western Iran, at 1:05 a.m. local time Friday, state-run television reported. The epicenter was in the mountainous villages south of Boroujerd and north of Doroud. At least 10 aftershocks struck the mountainous region throughout the night but a bigger tremor with a magnitude of 5.0, hit Doroud and surrounding villages at 4:47 a.m. local time, Friday, the television reported. The magnitude-5.0 quake was followed by one aftershock, the broadcast. AP

Sumo wrestlers surprise thief

TOKYO—A Japanese burglar who thought he was lucky to find an unlocked door Friday was shocked to be arrested by 20 massive sumo wrestlers who were staying at the building. Konosha Kawabata, 48, was rummaging inside a room in Osaka in the early hours when he was suddenly confronted by wrestler Dewanosato, who stands 180 cm (5'10") and weighs 131 kg (289 lb). "Without thinking, my body moved," Dewanosato, whose real name is Hideyuki Kawahara, told reporters. "I caught the guy and bear-hugged him." AFP

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US hostage predicted Iraq rebs' victory before release

DUBAI—FREED US HOSTAGE JILL CARROLL praised Iraq's insurgents and predicted their victory in an interview conducted by her captors before they released her Thursday, according to a video posted on the Internet.

The footage, which could not be independently verified, appeared to have been filmed shortly before the freelance journalist was released Thursday nearly three months after being kidnapped in Baghdad.

"Did you think the American army or the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) would save you at any time," a muffled male voice asked Carroll in accented English.

"Sometimes I thought maybe that they might come, they might find me, they might find a way to know where I am and come get me," she answered, dressed in the same baggy dress and headscarf she appeared in after her release.

-Carroll, 28, who worked mainly for the Boston-based Christian Science Monitor, was dropped Thursday at the door of the Iraqi Islamic Party headquarters in Baghdad's western Amuriyah district after be-

Her Iraqi translator was shot dead.

"Why did not they save you," asked the man.

"I think the mujahedeen (Islamic holy warriors) are very smart and even with all the technology and all the people that the American army has here, they still are better at knowing how to live and work here, more clever," she said.

"Does this mean something to you," asked the man.

"It makes very clear that the mujahedeen are the ones that will win in the end," said Carroll.

She was kidnapped by a group calling itself the Brigades of Vengeance, which had set numerous deadlines threatening to kill her if US-led forces failed to release all female detainees in Iraq.

The 8.5-minute tape, digitally stamped with the group's name



AMERICAN reporter Jill Carroll speaks during an interview with Baghdad Channel after her release, March 30, in Baghdad, Iraq.

starts with the man addressing the journalist as "dear Carroll" and asking her to describe how she had been treated by her captors.

"They treated me very well, like a guest given good food, kept safe, treated very, very well," she said.

"What will you tell the American people about the muja-

nedeem when you go back to America," asked the man.

"There are a lot of lies that come out of the American government

out of the American government, calling the mujahedeen terrorists. I think it is important that the American people hear from me that the mujahedeen are only trying to defend their country," she said. **AFP**

Power of prayer doubted

PRAYERS OFFERED BY strangers had no effect on the recovery of people who were undergoing heart surgery, a large and long-awaited study has found.

And patients who knew they were being prayed for had a higher rate of post-operative complications like abnormal heart rhythms, perhaps because of the expectations the prayers created, the researchers suggested.

Because it is the most scientifically rigorous investigation of whether prayer can heal illness, the study, begun almost a decade ago and involving more than 1,800 patients, has for years been the subject of speculation.

At least 10 studies of the effects of prayer have been carried out in the last six years, with mixed results. The new study was intended to overcome flaws in the earlier investigations. The report was scheduled to appear in *The American Heart Journal* next week, but the journal's publisher released it online Thursday.

The study's authors, led by Dr Herbert Benson, director of the Mind/Body Medical Institute near Boston, said that the findings were not the last word on the effects of "intercessory prayer. But the results, the

said, raised questions about how and whether patients should be told that prayers were being offered for them.

The researchers monitored 1,802 patients at six hospitals who received coronary bypass surgery, in which doctors reroute circulation around a clogged vein or artery.

The patients were broken into three groups. Two were prayed for; the third was not. Half the patients who received the prayers were told that they were being prayed for; half were told that they might or might not receive prayers.

Analyzing complications in the 30 days after the operations, the researchers found no differences between those patients who were prayed for and those who were not.

in another of the study's findings, a significantly higher number of the patients who knew that they were being prayed for—59 percent—suffered complications, compared with 51 percent of those who were uncertain. The authors left open the possibility that this was a chance finding. But they said that being aware of the strangers' prayers may also have caused some of the patients a kind of performance anxiety. **NY**

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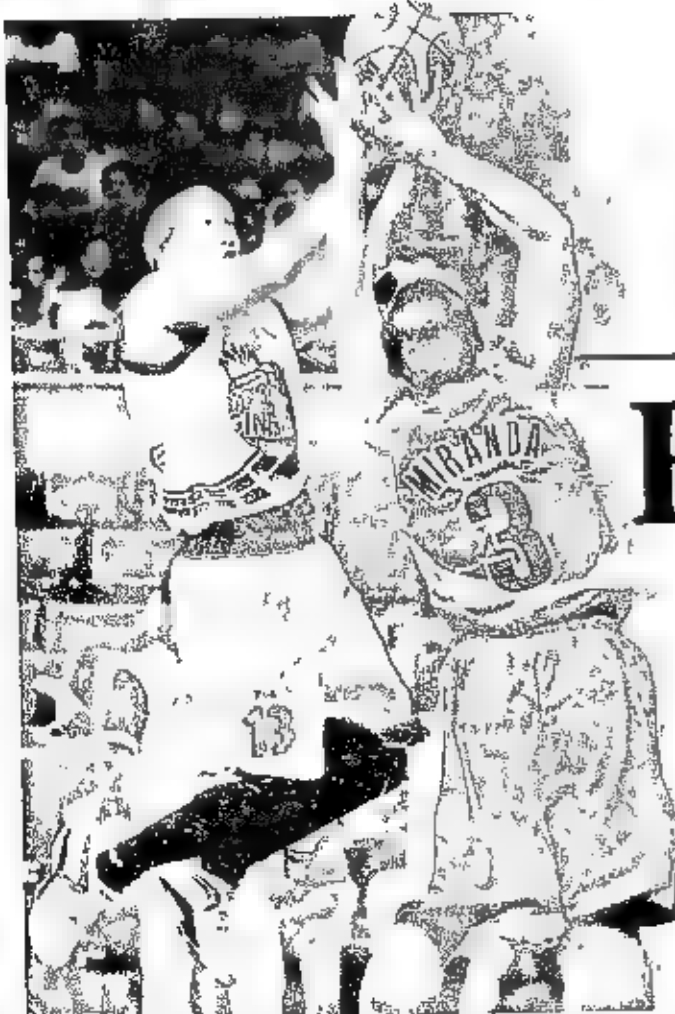
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GINEBRA's Jayjay Heisterbrand soars for a layup against Coca-Cola's Dennis Miranda.

ERIK ARAZAS

Kings end 3-game slide

By June Navarro

BARANGAY GINEBRA AVERTED the ignominy of a four-game skid with a nail-biting 84-81 victory over Coca-Cola last night in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Cuneta Astrodome.

Mark Caguioa's daredevil drive tied the count for the last time at 81 then delivered the game-clinching free throws with 11 ticks left as the Kings survived the Tigers' late surge for their third win in six outings.

The Tigers had three chances to send it into extra time, but Rob Wainwright, Johnny Abarrientos and William Antonio flubbed tries from three-point range as Coca-Cola absorbed its second straight defeat.

Despite the loss, the Tigers still kept the lead, but this time in a tie with the idle San Miguel Beermen with four victories and two setbacks.

"It's good to finally get a win after three losses," said Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen. "You will really struggle at first if you try to put a new system in."

Caguioa tossed in 21 points after shooting

GAME TODAY
(Cebu, Isabela)
4:30 p.m.—Air21 vs Sta. Lucia Realty
GAMES TOMORROW
(Araneta Coliseum)
4:10 p.m.—Barangay Ginebra vs Alaska
5:35 p.m.—San Miguel Beer vs Talk 'N Text

7-of-20 from the field while Eric Menk, fully recovered from an ankle injury that slowed him down for a week, fired 19 points on top of seven boards.

Jayjay Heisterbrand finished with 14 points, Kalani Ferreria had 10 while Rommel Adducul came up with double-double figures of 10 points and 12 rebounds for the Kings, who shot 41 percent from the floor.

"I cannot tell you what our new strategy is," said Tanquingcen. "It's for our opponents to find out. We just feel that it's about time we change the system after that semifinal

KINGS/A23

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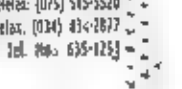
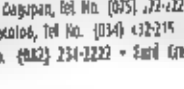
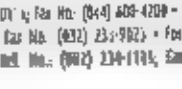
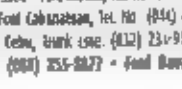
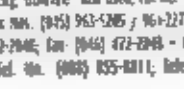
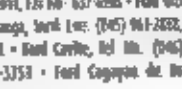
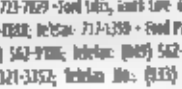
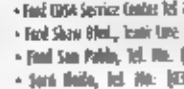
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Dumandan scores breakthrough win

By Musong R. Castillo

CANLUBANG, LAGUNA—MARVIN Dumandan closed out with a 2-over-par 74 yesterday, but held on to win his first big tournament by two strokes.

The 26-year-old standout from Riviera, despite bogeys in three of his last five holes, totaled 287 to win the 11th DHLWWExpress Amateur Open over Singaporean ace Quiney Quek, who also shot a 74.

Former winner Jun Bernis turned in a 71 for 290 and third spot with Southwoods stalwart Anthony Fernando shooting a 70 to check in solo fourth another stroke behind.

Jay Bayron, who was fanned at the start, matched par to finish alone in fifth with a 293 tally even as Gene

Bondoc and obscure Ferdinand Amunoz climbed to a share of sixth with day-best 68s.

Bondoc, a Philippine pool member, and Amunoz, a former caddy at Eastridge, joined National Caddies' Open program standout Mark Fernando, who shot a 76, in sixth place with 293 aggregates.

"I'm so happy because I finally won," Dumandan said in Filipino. "I've worked so hard for this first win. I hope that this marks the start of some bigger things for me in the future."

Meanwhile, Bambee Dela Paz submitted a final round 77 to win the women's division by four shots over veteran Anya Tanpinco.

Dela Paz, a 15-year-old incoming senior at Miram, called 228, while

Tanpinco shot a 75 then beat reigning RP Ladies' champ Debbie de Villa in a two-hole playoff for second spot. De Villa shot a 77 and tied with Tanpinco at 232 after 54 holes.

Dumandan started the day two shots ahead of Quek, padded this to five after 12 holes before coasting home.

Singapore's Jonathan Leong carded a 75 and finished alone in 11th spot with a 298 total, while Ronnie Torrecampo and Michael Bibat, two of five players tied for the lead after the second round, wound up in joint 12th.

Torrecampo ballooned to an 81 and Bibat, the former Singapore Am winner, skied to an 80 for 299, a stroke ahead of Joseph Labajo (79) and Boyet Saragoza (77).



MARVIN Dumandan (second from left) and Bambee Dela Paz hoist their trophies. With them is WWWExpress president Jose Feliciano (left) and Larry Liamson.

JUN BAFANAN

Archers battle Tamaraws today

DE LA SALLE TAKES ON FAR Eastern University and Letran battles Ateneo today at the resumption of the Total-Filoli-Flying-V Homegrown Cup at the San Juan gym.

La Salle's alumni and high school teams gun for their second straight wins after their victory over Letran in Saturday's opener.

Game time starts at noon, with the high school game between DLSU and FELU followed by the alumni match pitting veterans from both schools.

At 3 p.m., the Letran All-Stars meet the Ateneo alum followed by their schools' high school squads. Both the Knights AS and Blue Eagles AS are seeking their first vic-

tures.

Leading the Archers are Noli Locsin, Dwight Lago, Johnedel Cardel, Tony Boy Espinosa, Allen Patrimonio and Tyrone Bautista, while the Tamaraws boast Glenn Capacio, Andy de Guzman, Bay Cristobal, Dan Pasco, Harmon Codinera, Joel Valle, Dodong Postanes and Mon Valenzona.

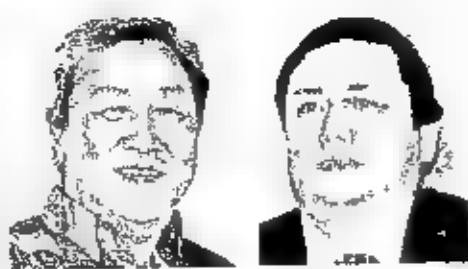
MY Games under way tomorrow

A FESTIVE AND COLORFUL opening ceremony will usher in the fifth edition of the Manila Youth Games (MY Games) tomorrow at the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo will be the guest of honor while Manila Mayor Lito Abenra will lead city hall luminaries and representatives from the city's 897 barangays and 130 public and private schools who are expected to grace the kickoff rites.

Action starts Monday in badminton, gymnastics, table tennis, swimming and volleyball among the city's finest in and out-of-school athletes aged 17 and under.

Organized by the Manila Sports



ATIENZA

ARROYO

Council (Masco) under chair Arnold "Ali" Atienza, the event is presented by Converse with support from the Philippine Sports Commission, Pagcor, San Miguel Corp., Super Ferry, Montaña Pawnshop, Globe Telecom, Milo, Air21, IntraSports, and Concept Movers.

Also invited to grace the opening rites are Presidential son and Pam-

panga Rep. Mike Arroyo, as well as the country's top sports officials led by Games and Amusement Board chair Eric Buhan, Philippine Sports Commission chair William Ramirez and PSC commissioners Leon Montemayor, Ambrosio de Luna, Rihie Garcia and Joey Mundo.

Football and baseball start on Tuesday at the Luneta ballpark and RMSC, respectively. Lawn tennis and softball will be held also at the Rizal sports complex beginning Thursday along with chess which will be staged at the Harrison Plaza Activity Center.

The centerpiece athletics competitions and the paralympics will fire off its three-day schedule Friday at the Rizal track, while taekwondo takes centerstage at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium on Sunday, April 9.

NBC gets Guerrero Brandy as title sponsor for 06 tilts

THE NATIONAL BASKETBALL Conference got a big lift the other day when Guerrero Brandy, which is distributed by Tanduay Distillery Inc., agreed to become the nationwide cagefest's title sponsor this season.

The deal was sealed in a meeting between NBC secretary general Tito Palma and Tanduay director Lucio "Bong" Tan Jr. at Tan's office in Pasig City.

Tanduay advertising manager Larry Li and marketing manager Andres Co also attended the contract signing.

"Sports has always been close to my heart," said Tan. "Guerrero Brandy, which is blended the traditional way and considered as a brandy for heroes, fits the league as it searches for new basketball heroes all over the country."

NBC president Nathaniel



NBC sec-gen Tito Palma (second from left) and Tanduay director Lucio "Bong" Tan Jr. seal the deal with a handshake. Also shown are Tanduay advertising manager Larry Li (left) and marketing manager Andres Co.

Orduña, Turalba top superkarting

KIDS JOEY ORDUÑA AND JUHA Turalba ruled separate classes recently in the kickoff of the 2006 Shell Helix Superkarting Series at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

The 9-year-old Orduña took a de-

cisive dive at the third turn with just two laps to go to win the Mini Rok title while Turalba pulled away early to claim the Rok Junior crown.

Orduña was running second when the polesitter Paolo Gonzales opened

wide. Seizing the opportunity, Orduña sneaked into the lead to the crowd's surprise and finished the 15-lap race in 12:07.806. Vencer John Suba followed suit and took runner-up honors just 0.246 seconds behind.

FORD NATIONAL TEAM SHOOTOUT 2006

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Stage 1: Club Qualifying Tournament			
April 11-15	Ateneo Golf & Country Club, Alibon, Batangas	April 18-19	Valley Golf & Country Club, Calabar, Mindanao
April 11-15	Orchard Golf & Country Club, Bataan, Bataan	April 18-19	West-Black Golf & Country Club, Marikina
April 11-15	Tagaytay Highlands Int'l Golf Club, Tagaytay	April 18-19	Manila Golf & Country Club, Forbes Park
April 12	Eastridge Golf Club, Inc., Alibon, Batangas	April 20-21	East-Black Golf & Country Club, Gen. Luna, Cebu
April 14-15	Sta. Elena Golf Club, Sta. Elena, Laguna	April 22	Canlubang Golf & Country Club, Canlubang, Laguna
April 15	Bayan Occidental Golf & Country Club		
Stage 2: Satellite Elimination in each district <small>Barang, North, South, East, West, and Visayas/Mindanao</small>			
Stage 3: Grand Finals			

Tangkad cagefest resumes

ST. SCHOLASTICA-Pampanga takes on Imus Pilot School-Cavite and San Beda-Manila tangles with Marist School-Antipolo in a pair of National Final matches in the Cherrier Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament today starting at noon at the Tiendesitas Peoples Village in Pasig City. The second round of the one-day round robin format pits Marist against St. Scholastica and San Beda-Manila against Imus Pilot followed by the last stage matches featuring St. Scholastica against San Beda-Manila and Imus Pilot against Marist. Side game events and PBA stars will spice up the event supported by Asidax. Product manager Teri Meneses said the top two teams will advance to the championship round.

JVC junior badminton

FUTURE badminton stars show their wares beginning today as they vie for quarterfinal berths in the 10-under division of the JVC Open Juniors Championships at SM North EDSA. Poveda's Cassandra Lim takes on Lito Locsin of Greencourt in one of the featured matches in the upper bracket while Samantha Ramos of Marikina Sports Hub and SAA's Juby Evangelista mix it up in the lower bracket of the girls' singles which kicks off at noon. Patricia Israel faces Michelle Cruz in another round of 16 match.

SPORTSWATCH

Summer squash clinic April 17

THE ANNUAL M/SRAP (Squash Rackets Association of the Philippines) summer squash clinic will be held simultaneously at the Makati Sports Club and the Manila Boat Club every Monday, Wednesday and Friday from April 17 to May 27. According to SRAP president Romeo M. Albano, the clinic is open to boys and girls 9 to 12 years old. The clinic is free and all participants who complete it will receive a certificate of attendance. Classes will be conducted from 9 a.m. to noon. Register at the Makati Sports Club on Altara Street, Salcedo Village, c/o Jaime Ortua (0918-9390226) and at the Manila Boat Club, Havana St., Sta. Ana, Manila, c/o Jun Paganpan (0918-6968822) or Eriger Balleber (0920-8013519) or e-mail Romy Dona at phi_squash@yahoo.com.ph.

Makati Coliseum 3-cock derby

MAKATI Coliseum's special 3-cock derby, featuring 70 matches, gets going at 5 p.m. today with B-Meg Derby Ace as sponsor. Guaranteed prize is P200,000, according to the hosts led by lawyer Enrico Lainez and Joe Barling, who will be assisted by the WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. Last Wednesday, Gerry Ramos topped the 4-cock derby hosted by Rey Oliveros. Meanwhile, slated on Monday is another edition of the Pinoy Cockers Association of the Philippines (PCAP) 5-cock derby. Entries are also pouring in for the Summer Saipulan 6-cock derby on April 28, 29, May 2, 4, 6, 11 and 13 at Makati Coliseum. Promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ said that aside from the P3 million cash prize, the winners will also get two brand new Toyota cars and two motorcycles for a whopping total of P4.4 million. Contact 896-3545 or 895-6475 (Joan or Stephanie).

Cash Premyo cockfest at Roligon

UPCOMING cockers and breeders from Metro Manila and nearby provinces clash at Roligon Mega Cockpit today as the Cash Premyo 3-cock derby rages at 5 p.m. with 70 matches lined up. A cash prize of P300,000 will be divided among the champions, said hosts Taling Captain, Mario Gulede and Abra Bernales. Participants include Nona San Pablo, Tos Reyes, A. Machuca, Neri Mamasad, Willy Apollo, Ric Pascual, Nelson Uy, Anita Masbate, Dong Locson, Mike and Erwin Businda, Ed Appari, Noli Bautista, Jutao Brothers and engineer Austria. A special prize of P20,000 will go to the fastest win champion. Meanwhile, the Tulaan 5-cock derby is billed on April 29, May 2, 4 and 6, with P2 million in guaranteed prize. Entry fee is P8,800. For details, call 851-2275, 833-1638 and 852-9812 (Jona).

Invitational chess tune-up games

THE COUNTRY'S top lady chessers are invited for the President Pichay Invitational tune-up matches today at the Synopados Music Bar at the Tourist Belt in Mabini, Marikina, (in front of Sea Palace Restaurant). The event, a brainchild of National Chess Federation of the Philippines president Rep. Prospero Pichay, is in preparation for the National Championships on April 11 to 18 at the Celebrity Sports Plaza.

Markon Bernardino



POKER TOUR: Philippine Poker Tour chair Roy Gamboa (seated right) and Solar Entertainment vice president Ralph Roy sign a memorandum of agreement for the media partnership between the PPT and Solar. Witnesses are Sports Plus channel manager Omar de Sagun and PPT marketing director Rey-Jun Gamboa.

SPORTS

Viloria finds no friends in PAL

BAP PRESIDENT Joey Lina must be at his wit's end. He keeps on, telling the public that he is not the villain in the 5-member basketball stakeholder group, but nobody seems to listen or to believe him.

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

It has been his word against the four others—the representatives of the PBA, the PBL, the UAAP and the NCAA, who have all tagged him as the holdout in the newly formed Pilipinas Basketball which has been envisioned to save Philippine basketball.

"When we embarked on this mission, the agreement among the five stakeholders was to restructure and reorganize the BAP by preparing a new set of constitution and by-laws. We worked on this framework right from the start and up to our fourth meeting, until POC president Peping Cojuangco called PBA commissioner Noli Eala to a meeting," Joey related.

Lina said that when the group got together again, Noli told them that the framework they had been working on was not acceptable to Peping and that they had to form a new organization with a new name and a radically changed constitution and bylaws.

Thus, Pilipinas Basketball was born. "It was not I who had reneged on the original agreement. It was the four others."

"I cannot in conscience affix my signature to the new organization, and in the process become a traitor to my group. It was Noli and the others who changed their minds, not me. I don't deserve all the distortion," Joey said.

Remember the newspaper story some weeks ago about boxing megastar Manny Pacquiao holding up a PAL flight to Hong Kong because he and his family arrived very late at the centennial airport?

Well WBC light flyweight champ Brian Viloria had his own experience with PAL last March 30, which was not quite as pleasant as Manny's.

A note from the American associate who had accompanied Brian and his father Ben on the flight back home to Los Angeles last March 30 read:

The good news is that we made it back to LA safe and sound. But our experience with PAL was not a pleasant one. I was astounded at the way Brian, a world champion who has brought honor to the country, was treated at the airport in Manila.

At the check-in counter, we were told that the flight was fully booked and that no upgrades were available, even on purchase. Then upon boarding, we saw that there were three empty first class seats. I confirmed their availability with one of the flight attendants and explained that I had been trying to get Brian upgraded from economy class. Brian and Ben were seated at the back of the plane in a 4-person row—a 12-hour bus ride would have been more comfortable.

The flight attendants were nice and tried to obtain a supervisor's approval to move Brian. However, no one would approve the upgrade.

I was generally okay with the effort until one of the supervisors came on board to talk with me—a gentleman named Luis Fernandez. Mr. Fernandez told me that he is the most senior official available and that he would not approve the upgrade.

Needless to say, his response was surprising, but worse was his tone. It was antagonistic, imperious and had the effect of souring the return flight home.

All I can say with certainty is, if I were to assemble a contingent of Hollywood personalities to come to Manila, they will not spend 2 minutes aboard a PAL flight suffering the same treatment Brian received.

Four key people, three of them from basketball, are behind the Nike Elite Basketball Camp which was patterned after the 5-Star Camp of the United States. These are Alex Compton, project director; legendary cage guru Ato Badolato, selection committee head; Mon Garcia, International Basketball Academy CEO; and Eric Altamirano.

The first of its kind in the country, the intensive, live-in, all expense-paid 6-day camp will accept participants only on invitation. A total of 80 high school players from 48 schools have been chosen for the summer camp which will be held from April 7 to 12 at the Brent International School in Mampalasan, Laguna.

Actual competitions will be held at the close of the camp where the best three students will be sent to the Nike training camp in China.

Boos for Sharapova; Roddick ousted

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—MARIA Sharapova blew a big lead, drew boos for taking a bathroom break and won only when opponent Tatiana Golovin was forced to retire in tears because of an ankle injury.

The hollow victory Thursday earned Sharapova a berth in the final at the Nasdaq-100 Open.

Sharapova failed to convert four match points in the second set and played for another 75 minutes before Golovin twisted her left ankle and fell chasing a corner shot.

A trainer taped Golovin's ankle. The French teenager played one more point,

hitting a return wide, then called it quits with Sharapova serving and leading, 6-3, 6-7 (5), 4-3.

The stadium was less than half full when the match ended, but the fans were noisy. Three times they jeered Sharapova for taking a break leading 5-4 in the second set.

The interruption didn't deter Golovin, who won the crowd's favor by completing her comeback from a 5-1 deficit in the set to force a third set.



RODDICK

No. 4-seeded Sharapova's opponent in the final Saturday will be No. 12 Svetlana Kuznetsova, who advanced by beating top-ranked Amelie Mauresmo for the second time in five weeks, 6-1, 6-4.

Andy Roddick hit another bump in his bid to shake an early-season slump, losing to David Ferrer 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 in the men's quarterfinals. Roddick, who slipped from third to fourth in the rankings last week, has yet to reach a

final this year.

"I feel a lot better leaving this tournament than I did a couple of days before this tournament," he said. "I feel like I'm on the verge of playing really good tennis again."

The loss cost Roddick a shot at top-ranked Roger Federer in the semifinals. Defending champion Federer rallied from a break down in the opening set and beat No. 9-seeded James Blake, 7-6 (2), 6-4.

Federer extended winning streaks of 25 straight matches against Americans, 46 matches in a row in the US and a record 22 in a row in Masters Series events. AP



OCHOA: Record-tying.

Ochoa fires 62; RP bets 10 down

RANCHO MIRAGE, CALIFORNIA—Lorena Ochoa listened to her father's advice and tied a US LPGA major championship record at 10-under 62 for the lead in the Kraft Nabisco Championship on Thursday.

The Philippines' Jennifer Rosales and Dorothy Delasin shot 72's and stayed 10 shots adrift.

Ochoa had only 100 or so people following her record round, which was fine with her. She was able to hear that familiar voice, her father urging her to attack the flags and stick it close.

"Just like this," Javier Ochoa said to her after Ochoa began the first round with a 9-iron to 2 feet burde.

And she obeyed, knocking down flags on a calm morning in the desert, piling up birdies until she was in the record books and enjoying a four-shot lead over 16-year-old Michelle Wie.

Wie got all the attention and matched her best score on the US LPGA Tour, a bogey-free 66 in which she played with poise and precision and had a birdie putt on every hole.

Ochoa gladly settled for a record score at Mission Hills. AP

Boys of summer ride 10-stage bike Tour April 10

FORMER CHAMPIONS WARREN Davadilla and Arnel Quirmit head the cast of 80 cyclists vying in the 2006 Tour Pilipinas-Padyak Pinoy slated April 20 to 30.

Gary Cayton, president of the organizing Dynamic Solutions Inc. (DOS-1), said the riders have been evenly spread into 10 teams by the Philippine National Cycling Association, the race supervising group headed by Paquito Rivas.

The 10-stage, 11-day Padyak Pinoy, presented by Tanduay Rum, will send the so-called "boys of summer"

through more than 1,700 kms.

THE TEAMS:

TEAM 1—Warren Davadilla, captain; Darwin Mirana, assistant captain; and members Danilo Redemano, Rolando Burgos, Sheno Torres, Gary Rogacion, Christopher Rodriguez and Bryant Bustamante. Coach: Carlo Guleb.

TEAM 2—Frederick Feliciano, captain; March McQuinn, assistant captain; and Jovani Delica, Anthony Melancia, Darwin dela Cruz, Bryan Sepino, Adrian Malanum and Dante Raymond. Coach: Cesar Lobosmonte.

TEAM 3—Arnel Espino, captain; Renier Claure, assistant captain; and Alfredo Asuncion, Benigno Marmol, Nicor Quizon, Roberto Gutierrez, Orlando Lopez and Leonardo Palat. Coach: Gerardo Igo.

Beach football fever hits Subic Freeport

BEACH FOOTBALL TAKES THE spotlight this summer with the two-day Legenda-Summer beach football championship set April 1-2 at the Waterfront area near the Boardwalk of the Subic Freeport.

More than 20 teams are expected to join the event, which is football played barefoot in the sand.

The tournament is organized by the Beach Football Association of the Philippines (BFAP) and sanctioned by the Philippine Football Federation.

BFAP president Mike Ashab said 12 women's teams have already confirmed their participation led by defending champion Baguio City.

San Beda, UP Diliman, and Mini-

an College are fielding two teams together with UST Viva Green, IPC Alabang, Virgo Intacta, and Tie Azul in the event hosted by the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

In the men's side, defending champion FEU has not registered yet but the confirmed teams are Baguio City, Manna Sita, Spanky Babies, Sta. Rosa Football Club, Makiling Football Club, and Legenda Hotel, whose CEO Khoo Boo Boon has been invited as special guest.

"We expect a heightened interest in football and we are inviting the public to watch the Legenda-Summer Beach Football tournament, it is open to the public," said Ashab, a former Iraqi football player.

Marion, Suns ruin Miller's night

INDIANAPOLIS—SHAWN Marion poured in 29 points, grabbed eight rebounds and dished out six assists as the Phoenix Suns eased past Indiana Pacers, 114-104, on Thursday to spoil Reggie Miller night at the Conseco Field House.

Steve Nash flamed with a triple double with 15 points, 13 assists and eight rebounds to help ruin the party for a sold-out arena that had come to watch former-great Reggie Miller's number 31 jersey retired and lifted to the rafters.

Peja Stojakovic led Indiana with 25 points and seven rebounds while Danny Granger added 16 points as the Pacers slumped to their third straight defeat and their sixth in eight games.

Pacers fans had little to cheer about as their team fell behind early and never got closer than nine points in the second half.

The Pacers lost despite chants of "Reggie! Reggie!" ringing out one last time as Miller pulled a rope that raised a No. 31 banner into the rafters of Conseco.

The retirement ceremony at halftime started with video highlights of Miller's career, and the chant that was heard after many of his clutch long-range shots began even before he had a chance to speak.

"I never imagined that I would earn my way to anyone's rafters," he said.

Pacers CEO Donnie Walsh, who was greeted with boos when he drafted the skin-

ny guard in 1987, credited Miller with leading the team to respectability after years as an NBA also-ran.

"You catapulted us into the elite of the NBA," Walsh told Miller during the ceremony. "You have been the heart and soul of this franchise for 18 years, and No. 31 deserves to go up with the best of the best."

Miller spent his entire career with the Pacers and credited Walsh, team president Larry Bird, team owners Melvin and Herbert Simon and the fans for making his stay special.

In Los Angeles, Tim Duncan drained 20 points and pulled down 13 rebounds and Tony Parker added 19 points powering the San Antonio Spurs past the Lakers 96-85.

Nazar Mohammed and Robert Horry each had 12 points as the NBA champion Spurs received double-figure efforts from six players on the way to their fifth straight win at the Staples Center.

● NBA on SOLAR SPORTS
11:30 a.m. San Antonio vs LA Lakers
(replay at 8 p.m.)

ON THE night the Pacers retired the number of Reggie Miller, the Suns' Steve Nash had a near triple-double to spoil the celebration.

Kings end 3-game slide

loss last conference."

The Kings, defending champions here, fell to eventual champion Red Bull after seven games in their semifinal series during the Fiesta Conference.

"We're just trying some new things to help improve the team," said Tan-Quingco. "But it's still a long way to go. I'm hoping to build on this and

keep on improving."

Billy Mamaril paced the Tigers with 18 points and Ali Peek posted 16 points and 15 rebounds.

John Arigo's three-pointer made it 79-all to cap a fightback for the Tigers from eight points down. The beefy Peek scored on an undergoal stab but Caguioa immediately returned the favor by driving through the heart of the

gritty Coca-Cola defense.

The scores:

First Game

GINEBRA 84—Caguioa 21, Mank 19, Heisterbrand 14, Ferreria 10, Adducul 10, Ho pac 5, Santos 3, Sotio 2, Salvacion 0.

COCA-COLA 81—Mamaril 18, Peek 16, Arigo 11, Antonio 8, Singson 7, Raavis 7, Abarrientos 7, Miranda 4, Morano 3, Lao 0, Wainwright 0.

Quarters: 20-23, 44-43, 65-61, 84-81

TEAM 4—Edison Ochoa, captain; Oscar Rendole, assistant captain; and Alexander Baylon, Michael Pili, Alden Calpio, Zeddy Mamo, Jayson Managat and Allan Patrick.

TEAM 5—Arnel Quirmit, captain; Oscar Fronda, assistant captain; and John Ricafort, Jerwin Torres, Antonio Hebrin, Harvey Sclam, Rodolfo Matangas and Allan Ricafort. Coach: Norberto Dooner.

TEAM 6—Santy Barrachera, captain; Hilson Mangalita, assistant captain; and Manuel Merdosa, Johnny Bautista, Ariel Flores, Romar Nacionales, Gerry Idelonso and Pharnie Reginald. Coach: Johnny Borja.

TEAM 7—Ronald Navero, captain; Wilfredo Calosa, assistant captain; and Ray Calosa, Ardy Buczo, Popilo Calosa, Ramiro Romero, Jeffrey Citativo and Saturnino Macasani. Coach: Cesar Catambay.

TEAM 8—Jose Calderon, captain; Tomas Martinez, assistant captain; and Noli del Rosario, Anthony Abellera, Riene Estabero, Job Babagay, Juniel Babagay and Franco Serrano. Coach: Calorino Bacunawa.

TEAM 9—Eusebio Quiñones, captain; Renier Austria, assistant captain; and Reinhard Gorantes, John Mark Guevara, Jones Servino, Erwin Calacungan, Ruel dela Paz and Ernesto Horakiza. Coach: Juan Aquino, Jr.

TEAM 10—Herato Sambrano, captain; Michael Reyes, assistant captain; and Roberto Torres, Nilo Jasul, Irish Valenzuela, Leonel Dimmano, Edgardo Belizier and Eli Cammarino. Coach: Renato Dokosa.

World-class tennis action at the **Sabikjika 17th International Championship**

One of the most awaited parts of the annual Mitsubishi Lancer International Juniors Tennis Championships, the J-League night, was held Thursday night and as expected, the players, coaches, parents and officials of the Mitsubishi Motors Philippines and Philippine Tennis Association, had a grand time enjoying the night.

Even the rain which forced the transfer of the celebration from the pool side to the ballroom failed to spoil the night, as everyone, including the staff of the Traders Royal Hotel, gobbled up the music provided by the Father Lily band while filling their tumblers with the sumptuous food from the buffet table.

And just like in the past 16 years, the players, led by top seed and heavy favorite Sanam Singh of India, exhibited a different kind of footwork and follow throughs on the dance floor.

And disciplined as the players are, those who would be seeing action the next day quietly, somewhat grudgingly, left early for their nights rest before their matches, but not before they were graced with Rali Art shirts by the Mitsubishi people.

Indian Hiren Joshi, travelling coach of Sanam Singh and Jeevan Nedunchezhyan, would not hide his satisfaction and happiness on his visit to the Philippines for the second straight year.

"I've always enjoyed my stay here. You can look for everything. The hotel and shopping malls are good and are near the tennis center," said the 50-year-old Joshi, whose coaching career spans 24 years. He was a former All-University champion and has completed in Indian Circuits as well as in Europe.

This is actually Joshi's third time in the country. His first was in 1985 when he accompanied two boys and two girls for the Marcos Cup, an international junior event similar to the Mitsubishi contest.

Joshi, who also trained Leander Paes in 1987, has a 12-year coaching stint at the Tamil Nadu Tennis Association before he was appointed by the All-India Tennis Association as travelling coach for Singh and Nedunchezhyan.

After winning the doubles title in Bangkok last week, Singh and Nedunchezhyan are eyeing their second title this week in Manila.

"I enjoy coaching and I feel proud everytime my players win. I want to motivate them to do their best," said Joshi, whose only daughter plays tennis as a hobby.

SPORTS

Asian Aquathlon Championship goes to Lakeshore

THE THIRD STAGING OF THE ASIAN Aquathlon Championship will be on Saturday, April 8, at the Lakeshore in Mexico, Pampanga.

This developed following the sponsorship agreement forged recently between the Triathlon Association of the Philippines (TRAP) and the Central Country Estate Inc. (CCEI), developer of the sprawling community and newest real estate development project in the region.

"We believe that The Lakeshore, with its man-made lake and jogging trail around the lake, is the perfect venue for the Asian Aquathlon Championship," said TRAP president Tom Carrasco Jr. "In fact it is emerging as one of the best sites for water-related sports."

CCEI chair Nestor Mangio welcomed the opportunity to once again host a major sports event following its hosting of the Lakeshore Triathlon Challenge last year and the National Triathlon Champi-

onship early this year.

"It is an honor for us to be involved with this prestigious Asian level championship event and it gives us the opportunity to show both local and visiting participants what The Lakeshore has to offer in terms of investments in a healthy lifestyle residential environment," said Mangio.

The Philippines will be fielding national triathlon team members and SEA Games veterans Arland Macasieb and

Noel Salvador, junior triathletes Mikki Quilala and Joash Serrano, last year's NAGT champion Gerrie Calinawan and Rowan Hernandez from Cebu, U-23 female champion Lea Coline Langit, Mimi Lucas, 2006 NAGT champion Kim Mangrobang, and returning Josephine Pilapil.

The 2.5K run 1K swim-2.5K run event is also sponsored by Speedo, Powerbar, Asian Centre for Insulation, David's Salon, and the PSC.

At least six countries, including the Philippines, have confirmed their participation in both the Asian Aquathlon Championship and the Asian Duathlon Championship, which will be held the following day at the Clark Expo grounds and hosted by the Clark Development Corp. (CDC).

Korea and Uzbekistan will be fielding its national teams while Macau and the Czech Republic have also confirmed their participation.

End of road for RP entry

By Marc Anthony Reyes

DENISE DY FINALLY HIT THE end of the road.

Third seed Maya Gaverova of Russia played the role of a kill-joy by scoring a 7-5, 6-2 triumph over the Filipino yesterday to reach the semifinals of the 17th Mitsubishi Lancer junior tennis championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The fifth-seeded Dy, the lone local hope in the quarters, blamed a string of unforced errors for the loss, especially in the second set when she tried too hard to get back in the game after narrowly losing the first set.

"I played really bad," said the 16-year-old Dy, who is playing in the Federation Cup later this year. "I should have done better."

Gaverova, the Egypt and Thailand juniors open champion last year, will take on second seed Khrystyna Antoniyshuk of Ukraine in the semis starting at

9 a.m. today.

Antoniyshuk, who won the Thai juniors open early this year, held off American Veronica Li, seeded No. 11, 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Top seed Sacha Jones of New Zealand trounced seventh seed Thai Noppawan Lertcheewakarn, 6-1, 1-6, 7-5, to set a semis duel against eighth seed Stefanie Voegelé of Switzerland, a 7-5, 1-6, 6-2 victor over Chloe Jones of the US.

In boys' action, Chinese qualifier Yan Bai upset top seed Sanam Singh of India, 7-5, 6-1, to make the semis. He will face third seed Hsin Han Lee of Chinese Taipei, who eliminated fifth seed Artur Chernov of Russia, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Second seed Sho Aida of Japan overcame a shaky first set before disposing of Russian Daniil Arsenov, 7-6 (4), 6-2. The Japanese will square off with Hsien Yin Peng of Chinese Taipei, who scored a 5-7, 6-3, 6-2 shocker over Indonesia's Jeevan Neduchezhiyan.



DENISE Dy: Her best isn't enough against Maya Gaverova.

RON LIM

Rain or Shine seeks leadership vs Hapee

RAIN OR SHINE MAY BE LOADED WITH veteran cagers, but coach Leo Austria still gets excited over a prized new recruit.

Austria hopes Sammie Emano's imposing 6-foot-10 presence will make a difference once again when Rain or Shine shoots for the solo lead against Hapee-PCU in the PBL Unity Cup today at the San Andres Gym.

"I know the potential of this guy, that's why we never had second thoughts in getting him," said Austria of Emano, who played a key role in Rain or Shine's second victory Thursday.

While the defending champions gun for their third straight win at 2 p.m., Toyota Otis and Harbour Centre will try to recover from recent losses at 4 o'clock.

With their big men again taking charge, the Elasto Painters scored a 73-67 win over Toyota Otis and claimed a share of the lead with the Montaña Jewels.

The Painters banked on the 6-7 Jay-R Reyes and 6-5 Marvin Ortiguerra, who teamed up for 29

GAMES TODAY
(San Andres Gym)
2 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Hapee-PCU
4 p.m.—Harbour Centre vs Toyota Otis

points.

Emano, who suited up for the disbanded RP-Cebuana Lhuillier team and the University of Mindanao, figured prominently on both ends of the court in the

closing minutes.

But Austria knows that the Painters should be cautious against Hapee-PCU's bevy of shooters, led by last conference's top scorer Jason Castro.

Castro poured in 21 points, including two key baskets in the final stretch, in Hapee-PCU's 68-63 win over Harbour Centre.

However, coach Junel Baculi said the 1-1 Teestmasters have yet to reach top form. "Hopefully, as the days go along we'll be able to adjust," he added.

Meanwhile, Montaña Jewels center Ken Bono was named as the league's Player of the Week by the PBL Press Corps.

Jasmine W. Payo

2 RP pugs fight for Int'l titles

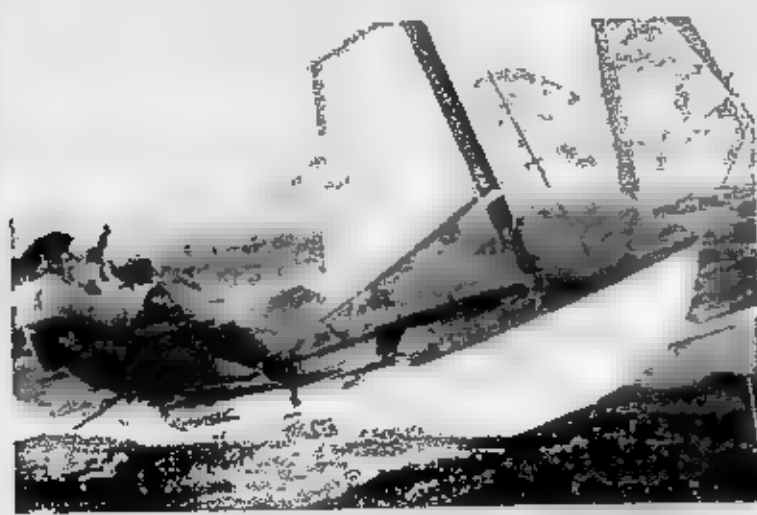
A FEVERISH BENEDICT SUICO IS GIVEN only a slight chance to unseat World Boxing Council International flyweight champion Monelisi Myekeni today in South Africa.

In a long distance call yesterday, Suico's manager Rex "Wakee" Salud said his ward still has fever due to tonsillitis hours before the fight was to take place at Johannesburg's Wembley Arena.

Suico weighed in at 110.2 lbs while Myekeni tipped the scales at 110.5 lbs.

Undefeated Gabriel Pumargoes up against WBC International minimumweight Tshepo Lefele in another 12-round rumble. Pumar weighed in at 103.7 lbs, while Lefele came in at 104 lbs.

Mercito Gesta, the third Filipino in the "Parade of Champions" card, won't be able to fight, however. The undefeated Gesta, a super bantamweight from Cebu, failed in his second medical test after passing an initial test last Tuesday. Salven L. Lagumbay, contributor



CREWS tack into southeasterly winds during the Hobie 16 National Championship off Talisay, Batangas.

Clement-Jaravata tops Hobie 16 nat'l tourney

THE TEAM OF CHARLIE CLEMENT and Norman Jaravata topped the recent 9th Philippine Hobie 16 National Championship at the Taal Lake Yacht Club (FLYC) in Talisay, Batangas, winning both the National and the Open categories, and becoming the first all-Filipino team to rule the Open Category.

In the National Category, 2nd place went to the PSA (Philippine Sailing Association) tandem of Rafael Buire and Rudy Magsanay. Third place went to Eric and Shelli Tomacruz of TLYC. In the Open Category, Team Saipan's Tony Sterns

and Janet McCullough finished second, while Eric and Shelli Tomacruz again came in third.

The race conditions were punishing with north easterly winds blowing from 25 to 35 knots. The team of Jun Villanueva and Nestor Soriano, of race sponsor Mobile1, dismasted on the first day and had to retire from competition. Tong Shung and Mark Haswell of Hong Kong also retired due to boat damage.

Sponsored by Mobile1, iPod, Rudy Project, and Soluziona, the Nationals drew competitors from as far as Australia, Alaska, the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, and Saipan.

Junk MoU, BAP head asks Fiba

By Jasmine W. Payo

BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE PHILIPPINES president Joey Lina requested the international basketball federation (Fiba) yesterday "to set aside or rescind" its Memorandum of Understanding with the Philippine Olympic Committee and lift the suspension barring the country from international meets.

In a letter addressed to Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann, Lina said the POC had "brazenly violated" the MoU, thus "justifiable grounds" exist to nullify the agreement.

The POC and Fiba forged the MoU last Sept. 29. It outlined the conditions under which the Fiba suspension would be lifted to allow the Philippines to compete again in international tournaments.

"This is to give Fiba a chance to react to this new development, and we'll take it from there," said Lina.

Lina stressed that the best way to lift the Fiba suspension is for the BAP to "work out necessary changes" in its constitution and by-laws, then apply for reinstatement in the POC.

"Maybe we can still work on the readmission of the BAP maybe we can still work something out with the POC," said Lina.

On April 4, POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco and representatives of the country's four major leagues will meet with Baumann in Seoul, South Korea.

The group will inform Baumann about Pilipinas Basketball, the new cage body designed to replace the BAP.

In a separate statement, former POC president Lt. Col Julian Malonso asked the stakeholders who crafted Pilipinas Basketball—the PBA, PBL, UAAP and NCAA—to just "wait for the decision" since Lina has appealed his case to the Fiba arbitary office.

Spring Oil, Pearl share Picaa lead

REIGNING TITLIST SPRING COOKING OIL kept its composure under grinding pressure to beat National Interclub champion Wang's Balclub, 64-62, and keep its share of the lead with Pearl Manila Hotel-Emilio Aguinaldo College in the 2006 PICA Open basketball tournament at the EAC gym in Manila.

Rodel Manuel and Mark Yee provided the 1-2 scoring punch for Spring, which rallied from an eight-point halftime deficit to clinch its second straight win in the six-team, double-round tournament sponsored by Tomish Café (Dapitan) and Chloe Lightings.

Manuel scattered 16 points, while Yee added 13 points for the Cooking Oil Masters, who debuted with a 77-73 win over King's Bakeshop last March 28.

Cholo Medina carried the fight for Wang's with 11 markers.

The day also belonged to Pearl-EAC, which leaned on a buzzer-beating three-point shot by Samous Uy to shock Homer Cagers, 98-96, in double overtime.

Uy nailed a desperation three-pointer as time expired, enabling the Hoteliers of coach Nomar Isla to erase a 95-96 deficit and join the Cooking Oil Masters in the early lead with two straight victories. Jester Ebuena led all scorers for Pearl-EAC with 26 points.

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Jopson captures line honors in Danao age-group triathlon

FORMER ASIAN JUNIOR TRIATHLON champion Nonoy Jopson, 31, took line honors at the second leg of the 2006 Speedo-National Age Group Triathlon (NAGT) series held in Danao City in Cebu City last weekend.

But even as Jopson took the 30 to 34 age group title with a cumulative time of 1:52:55 for the 1K swim-30K bike-7K run race, it was the duo of junior triathletes Neil Catil, 19, from Devao and local bet Rowan Fernandez, 16, who provided the excitement as they battled throughout the race.

Fernandez was ahead of Catil by more than five minutes after the swim leg, but lost ground in the ensuing bike

leg where he suffered mechanical trouble, allowing Catil to catch up and wrest the lead in the final run leg.

With Catil finishing in 1:59:54 to Fernandez's 2:00:36, the duo topped the junior category.

Other age group champions in the event sponsored by Speedo, David's Salon, Asian Centre for Insulation Phils., Metro Alliance Group, PSC, and local sponsors Danao Telecoms and the city government of Danao, were Rene Joseph Balbuena, 2:00:19 in the 20 to 24 group, Mark Ugbinar, 2:11:58 in the 25 to 29, Ronaldo Biagan, 2:02:58 among the 35 to 39 entries, while Nicasio Rivas ruled the 45 to 49 age group with a time of 2:22:36.

Last year's NAGT champion Gerrie Calinawan from Cebu was also a guest entry in the race and finished with a time of 1:42:19, the fastest finishing time actually among the participants.

The event was organized by Danao City councilor Boying Rodriguez as part of the city's sports development program and was held in conjunction with a kiddie fun run and an age group cycling competition.

"This year we saw an increase in the number of participants in Danao, including seven first-timers from Cebu and entries from Cagayan de Oro and Devao," said Triathlon Association of the Philippines president Tom Carrasco Jr. "We expect the same result in future races."

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2 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00	7 NANNY MCPHEE 1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
3 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	125 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:45
4 JUST FRIENDS 11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00	9 SHE'S THE MAN 12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00
6 ICE AGE 2 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00	10 ULTRAVIOLET 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

ERMITA

1 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00	5 VENOM 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
2 NANNY MCPHEE 12:00 1:50 3:40 ULTRAVIOLET 5:50 7:50 9:50	6 JUST FRIENDS 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9:50
3 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	7 BASIC INSTINCT 2 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50	

METRO EAST

1 SHE'S THE MAN 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	5 VENOM 12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10
2 ICE AGE 2 12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:15	6 NANNY MCPHEE 1:00 3:00 ULTRAVIOLET 5:00 7:00 9:00
3 BASIC INSTINCT 2 11:05 1:35 4:05 6:35 9:05	7 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN 12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:05
4 JUST FRIENDS 11:00 1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00	8 MOMENTS OF LOVE 11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

NOVALICHES

1 BASIC INSTINCT 2	4 VENOM
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN	5 ICE AGE 2
3 JUST FRIENDS	6 MOMENTS OF LOVE

CITISQUARE MALABON

1 MOMENTS OF LOVE	1 ICE AGE 2
2 ICE AGE 2	2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 RESERVE	3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
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3 BASIC INSTINCT 2
4 VENOM

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4 GLORY ROAD

DASMARINAS

1 ICE AGE 2
2 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
5 VENOM

ANGELES

1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 MOMENTS OF LOVE
3 ICE AGE 2
4 VENOM

IMUS

1 ICE AGE 2
2 COED SCANDAL
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 VENOM
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
6 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

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1 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 MOMENTS OF LOVE
4 ICE AGE 2
5 HOUSE OF FURY
6 VENOM

BACOLOD

1 ICE AGE 2
2 SYRIANA
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 THE DARK
5 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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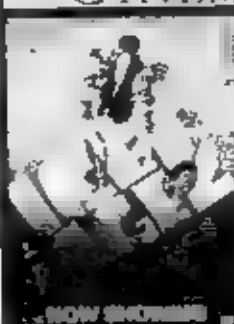
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SM CITY MARILAO ICE AGE 2 MOMENTS OF LOVE ULTRAVIOLET MOMENTS OF LOVE	SM CITY BATANGAS MOMENTS OF LOVE MOMENTS OF LOVE ICE AGE 2 16 BLOCKS	SM CITY LUCENA 16 BLOCKS ICE AGE 2 THE DARK MOMENTS OF LOVE
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A24



BLIGE. Revealing
frankness.

Mary J. Blige is still a work in progress

NEW YORK—IT doesn't take much to get Mary J. Blige to shift into full confession mode.

In less than an hour, Blige freely talks about her personal battles with issues that would take most people years of therapy—or a few drinks—to divulge: Substance abuse, relationship woes, insecurity issues—even feelings of self-doubt and self-hate.

Triumph

Blige's frankness in revealing her hurt, anguish and eventual triumph over troubles has been one of the main reasons why she has maintained strong success—and a devoted, feverish following—over her 14-year career.

Through song, Blige has taken fans through her personal transformation—from a perulant, drug-abusing starlet to a mature, well-adjusted, sober superstar and inspirational figure.

But, the transformation is not over—and Blige makes that clear in her latest work, the best-selling album, "The Breakthrough."

Happier place

Though she's clearly in a much happier place than where she started, she's not afraid to reveal that she's still trying to stay on the right path—and it's no easy task!

"I'm trying to walk the walk, but this is hard," says Blige. "I don't want to be falling flat on my face in front of you guys, but I might fall flat on my face because the process of healing has started."

"The Breakthrough" is far from a tearjerker, with effervescent love ballads and upbeat grooves. But, the album also contains plenty of sore subjects, from relationship dramas to abandonment issues, to abusive relationships.

State of mind

"Mary's music is based on her state of mind at that period in time," says Sean Garrett, who co-wrote Blige's next single, "Enough Cryin'." "She represents the struggle—and she's made it through, and that's the biggest triumph. It's like she's won the race."

Blige is certainly

MARY A23

Positive values in Hanopol's comeback album

By Remy Umerez

PINOY ROCK ICON MIKE Hanopol conveys optimism and good values in his latest album, "Lagablab"—his first collection in 10 years. Hanopol and his family have been residing in the US for almost 20 years now.

Every song in the 10-track album has an important story to tell. He shares, "One morning, I saw a long line of people in Ermita. They all wanted to work abroad. That incident inspired me to write 'Maghilitay,' the album's carrier single."

Peace

In "Peace Naman," Hanopol advocates peace: "Bigyan naman natin ang ating bayan/kahit kaunting kapayapaan/Pauratin din natin ang katarungan/huwag gumamit ng karahasan."

In "Ang Magulang Mo," he looks back at and examines some decisions he made as a young man. In 1967, he joined his band in Vietnam against his father's wishes.

Going bananas

THE BANANA IS A wonderful fruit we can eat as a habit—it's healthy for us, and it's cheap. Here are interesting facts about this special fruit:

1. Two bananas can provide enough energy for a strenuous, 90-minute workout.

Healthy

2. Bananas stimulate hemoglobin production because they are high in iron. Thus, they prevent anemia and keep the blood healthy.

3. Bananas reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke. They have high potassium content, which keeps the heart healthy and the circulatory system strong. The New England Journal of Medicine confirms that "eating bananas as part of the regular diet can cut the risk of death by as much as 40 percent."

4. Another research shows that potassium-rich bananas assist the learning process by making students more alert.

5. Bananas are rich in fiber. Therefore, they promote regular bowel action. They help clean the intestinal tract and prevent colon cancer.

6. They relieve heartburn and ulcer.

Stress

7. Potassium plays a role in regulating heartbeat by sending oxygen to the brain and regulating the body's water balance. Stress reduces potassium levels and throws our body into an abnormal state.

8. People who want to break their smoking habit can turn to bananas for help. The vitamin B, potassium and magnesium in the fruit aid the body in recovering from nicotine withdrawal.

9. If you want some relief from itchy mosquito bites, rub the affected area with the inside of banana skin. This reduces swelling and irritation.

10. Compared to apples, bananas have four times the protein, twice the carbohydrates, three times the phosphorus, and five times the vitamin A and iron.

Mary J. Blige . . .

From page A2-2

winning the race in terms of sales: When "The Breakthrough" was released in December, it shot to No. 1 with the best sales of her career, and so far has sold two million copies—her most successful record in years!

Ironically, it was when she decided to not address the pain in her life on a record that fans tuned her out.

Her last album, 2003's "Love & Life," was expected to be a top-seller. But, when it was released, the album only achieved mediocre sales.

Blige calls the experience a hard but valuable lesson. She rationalizes, "I learned to never ever go against what was in my heart!"

The samba-tinged "Sa Aking Pag-uwi" is romantic, while "Hawakan Mong Mabuti," a duet with Brownbeat All-Stars' Myra Ruaro, dispenses tips on how to keep relationships stable.

Other charming collaborations: "Hindi Ka Magsisi" with Inago's Aya de Leon; "Nanangasay" with Francis Magalona, and "Maghilitay" with Session Road's Hannah Ro-

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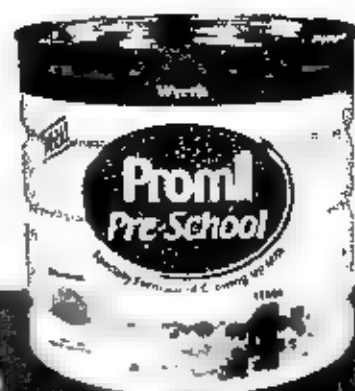
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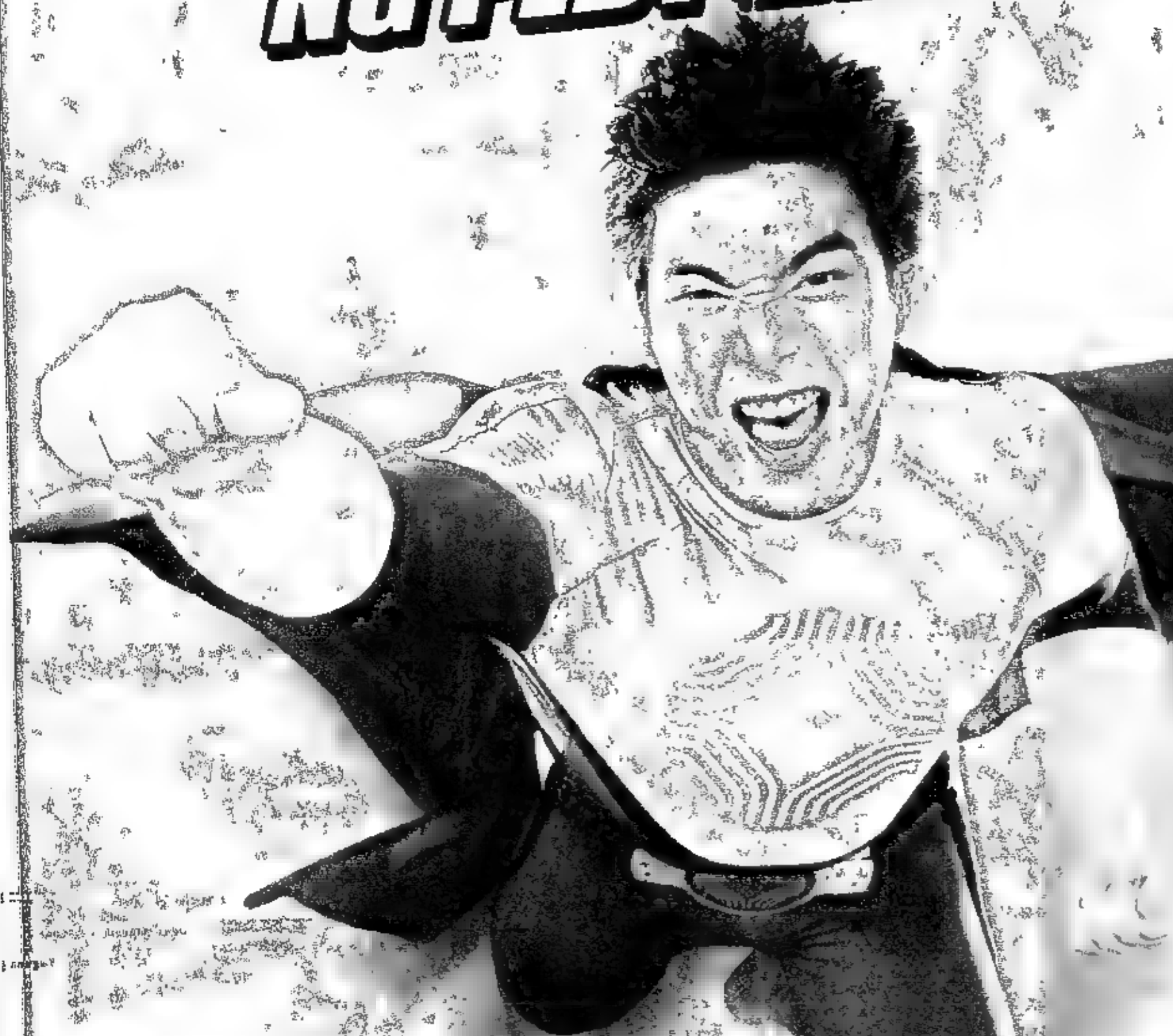
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'Princess Lulu' heartthrob juggles TV, film projects

By Rito P. Asilo

FROM MIMI ORDINARIO: "I AM an avid follower of 'Princess Lulu' because the chemistry of its charming leads amuses and entertains me. Has the actor playing Marco Jung acted in the movies? Tell me more about him."

SHOW BIZ Q&A

Rito P. Asilo

the star-crossed pair!

The film went on to break box-office records in South Korea, and capped its success when it was declared 2002's biggest hit among Korea's 74 films released that year!

Among the dozen films Jung has top-billed: "My Boss, My Hero," his first big hit, ranked sixth among Korea's 52 feature-film releases in 2001. ("Friend," starring heartthrob Won Bin, and "My Sassy Girl" took the top two spots, respectively.) "The Last Witness," his other film that year, landed in 12th place.

Hilarious

In the hilarious "My Boss, My Hero," Jung plays a feared gang leader who is sent back to high school after he develops an inferiority complex about his lack of education, and puts his gang in zany, embarrassing situations along the way. In "The Twins" (2005), he plays dual roles—as a successful lawyer and a hardworking Everyman. Their lives are turned upside down when the former is charged with a crime.

In "Perfect Match," a professional matchmaker has a hard time finding a romantic match for her handsome but reluctant computer-programmer client (Jung). But, is she deliberately sabotaging the dates she herself arranged for him?

"North Korean Guys" is an ad-

KIM AND JUNG.
From the big screen to the boob tube.



gory about two North Korean fishermen who drift off to South Korea after they fall asleep while fishing. Penniless and homeless, they join a singing contest, whose grand prize is a trip to North Korea!

In "Unborn but Forgotten," Jung plays a detective who's after the trail of a serial killer who baits his victims through a website, whose online "visitors" die after 15 days! In "A Wacky Switch," he plays a frustrated novelist switching roles with a mobster boss!

Corrupt and murderous

In "Another Public Enemy," he plays a bad guy—a corrupt and murderous business heir.

In the historical epic, "The Legend of Evil Lake," Jung plays a general who must destroy the evil spirit imprisoned in a mystical lake. Unfortunately, the spirit has taken the form of his beloved wife!

Last year, Jung's fans were

caught in a frenzy when he teamed up again with Jung Eun for the television series, "Princess Lulu" (as Marco and Lulu, respectively).

Though highly anticipated, the series soon lost steam in the ratings game against its fierce rival, "Life in Pink." The show was criticized for "excessive product placements" and for its "unrealistic storyline." At one point, Kim threatened to leave the series, and even apologized to fans on her website!

Syndication

However, when the series was released for syndication, Hong Kong's Star TV doled out a staggering \$940,000 for its rights—the biggest tag price ever paid for a Korean television series! It was then released in Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines—not bad for a series that failed in its own country!

Baltazar and Patriarca come up with truly illuminating book

By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN WE WERE IN HIGH school at the Ateneo de Cagayan in Cagayan de Oro City, our mentor in campus theater was a Jesuit scholastic named Armando Baltazar. He also mentored us when we represented Northern Mindanao in the Jaycees' Voice of Democracy finals in Manila.

Due to his dynamic love for theater and elocution, "Fr. Balty" influenced us to choose the performing arts and communication as our own life's work.

Influence

Balty later chose not to pursue his religious vocation, but he remained a friend and seminal influence when we came to Manila to start our career in media and theater.

Much later, we would have dealings with him when our musicals were staged at Equitable PCI Bank's theater. As executive director of the bank's foundation, Balty has always been ready to help significant productions find the performing venue they deserve.

Most recently, Balty delighted us anew when he sent us a copy of his new book, "Illuminations—Life and Its Passages," with "words by Armando S. Baltazar and images by Franco M. Patriarca."

Patriarca, a gifted photographer, also studied at the Ateneo de Cagayan, where he made his mark as a visual artist of great skill and artistry.

Insights

"Illuminations" is a fine addition to anybody's library, especially if you're attuned to meditation and the insights that can be derived from such an inward-looking activity (or lack of it).

Balty's text and verses are perfectly complemented by Franco's rinsingly lovely images. The book's insights are gathered under various headings, like "God



MEDITATIVE musings in Baltazar's book are rooted in reality.

and His People," "Love," "Of Angels and Memories," and "Art, Beauty and Things of the Spirit."

Despite its meditative bent, "Illuminations" is truly and dynamically illuminating because it sets its musings in the here and now. Balty is a perceptive observer and participant in life as it ebbs and flows around us, so his insights are rooted in reality—and that makes them truly valuable and relevant.

Examples

Any number of examples come to mind, but we would especially like to share these.

"This is the beginning of fulfillment: The emptying of oneself That God may take possession of us."

And form us to the image of His perfection."

"The seed in the soil has one distinct destiny: to be thus or that bloom. The seed in the mind has endless possibility."

BALTAR/A3-5

'Edsa 1986' deserves.

From page A3-1

the special, but what really stand out are its clear progression of events, its US footage, the inspiring recollections of eyewitnesses, and the production's creative way of making 20-year-old events spring back to life again.

Insightful

The special's clear and insightful sequencing of the events that led up to the EDSA Revolution is a

great service to viewers, especially the youth, because it touches on factors and issues that are relevant and important to our national life to this day.

The sequences taped in the United States, give the special a unique dimension not found in other TV renderings of the EDSA Revolution. It took a huge added expense to make it happen, but it was worth it, because it has set

the historical event in a larger, more informed context.

The eyewitnesses' recollections are particularly choice and moving, because they tell it like it is, with none of the rationalizations and ego-boosting that mar other people's versions of the event.

Quotes like "Are you the only one who has the right to die for his country?" reach out through

EDSA/A3-5



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AGC	1 ICE AGE 2: THE MELTDOWN	2 BASIC INSTINCT 2	3 VENOM	4 MOMENTS OF LOVE
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Love Malls

Paul McGuigan directs stylish, hammy crime caper

By Noelani Torre

A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY, a fixed horserace, two rival New York crime lords living in identical highrises across each other, and a slew of seemingly unconnected murders—these are some of the elements present in Paul McGuigan's new crime thriller, "Lucky Number Slevin."

Starring Josh Hartnett as the not-so-lucky Slevin, the film opens with explosive scenes of four people getting mysteriously killed.

Stranger

Then, we see Bruce Willis (in full action-hero mode) explaining what a Kansas City shuffle is to a stranger in a deserted airport lounge.

The story goes off in all sorts of tangents from thereon, and if you've seen "Pulp Fiction," "The Usual Suspects" or "The Sting," you'll be familiar with this kind of convoluted plot.

The Kansas City shuffle is what gamblers call a simple act of misdirection. Have them looking right while you're doing something on the left. It's a con job, which is also what this movie is.

The story centers on out-of-towner Slevin who goes to New York to stay at the apartment of his friend, Nick Fisher. His friend turns out not to be there, he meets Lindsey (Lucy Liu), the cute girl from across the hall, and he gets descended on by two thugs who insist he's Nick Fisher, and that he owes "the Boss" \$96,000!



HARTNETT AND FREEMAN. Lead thriller's all-star cast.

Then he gets dragged to the Boss (Morgan Freeman) and is offered a deal—"his" debt will be forgiven and his life saved if

he kills the son of the Boss' rival, the Rabbi. Why is he called a Rabbi? Because he is one, natch.

While Slevin is considering his options, he's visited by another set of thugs who are also Hassidic Jews. Fisher, it appears, also owes the Rabbi (Sir Ben Kingsley) quite a lot of money.

To make his life even more complicated, he's also acquired a cop tail in the form of one persistent detective (Stanley Tucci). Willis, meanwhile, pops up mysteriously here and there, and Lindsey plays detective in her spare time.

Tongue-in-cheek quality

Okay, let's stop there before we give it all away. Are you reeling from all the big names yet? It is a star-studded cast, and the best performances belong to Freeman and Kingsley, who look like they're enjoying hamming it up a

lot. The movie does have a hammy feel, a tongue-in-cheek quality that is as enjoyable as all the clever lines that the characters are gifted with.

McGuigan ("Wicker Park") gives the film a light, stylish feel. Everything works pretty well during the first half, but the problems set in when all the knots are being unknotted in the end.

The twists, you see, are actually explained to us. This isn't like "The Usual Suspects," where the realization is very effective. Here, we have a scene-by-scene explanation that could have been handled a great deal better. The movie also loses its light, fun and bordering-on-absurd quality when it nears the end, dragging us into a different kind of story altogether.

Barbara Perez' encounter with a Hollywood Christ

By Behn Cervantes

IN THE EARLY '60s, Barbara Perez was at the top of her career in local show business. She was known as the Audrey Hepburn of the Philippines. Indeed, this lass from Pangasinan was a dead ringer for the Hollywood actress who was then the toast of Tinseltown. She was also one of the favorite models of Ramon Valera, Ben Farrales and Pitoy Moreno.

Dramatic actor

Barbara was romantically inclined toward talented dramatic actor Robert Arevalo. She was a UST student when movies—via Sampaguita Pictures—beckoned.

Now, Hollywood was calling as well.

Producers John Monks and Richard Goldstone arrived in search of a young actress to portray a native of Guam who comes to the aid of an American guerrilla, and chose Barbara for the coveted role in their war drama, "No Man Is An Island."

Big news

That was big news for the local movie industry, because Barbara

was going to act opposite Jeffrey Hunter, the actor who portrayed Jesus Christ in "King of Kings."

I asked convent-bred Barbara: "Was there something in Hunter that reminded you of Christ?"

Barbara replied, "He was very gentle." I asked how she got along with her leading man.

"He was a very private person. Even when we were billeted in Subic, he kept to himself most of the time. In fact, I would only see him when we rehearsed for a scene we would shoot the next day."

So, did she call him Jeffrey or Mr. Hunter? "Because he kept to himself, I called him Mr. Hunter," Barbara answered.

I had read that his career had suffered despite his obvious promise because his second wife (after Barbara Rush) meddled with his career choices and often stepped on many professional toes.

"Did you meet the wife," I asked. "I didn't," Barbara replied. "If she indeed controlled him, it was probably because he was truly a gentle person."

Consciousness

"But the Christ character never entered your consciousness while you worked with him?" I pressed on. "Jeffrey had blue eyes, I was almost mesmerized by him when I looked straight into his eyes."

"When I went to Hollywood prior to our film's release, he tendered a dinner for me in Sta.



Perez. Chose love over career.

Monica. During the party, he showed footage he took of the movie in progress in Subic. The home I lived in during the two-week publicity campaign used to be owned by Greta Garbo, no less!"

Any other recollections of Hunter? "The Hollywood cast and staff had their own ration of meals, but he always asked for the food of the Filipinos. He wanted to connect with us—and he did, because I remember him to this day because of that."

And what happened to Hollywood's other tempting offers? She answered: "I married Robert!"



HUNTER. Played Jesus in "King of Kings."

Studio 23 sticks to youth market

By Jocelyn Valle

"STUDIO 23 COMPETES WITH all channels, even, to some extent with ABS-CBN," says Leo Katigbak, managing director of Channe. 2's affiliate. He downplay talks that the war of the networks has invaded the UHF realm.

GMA 7 has its own QTV 11, which is said to be the third most-watched channel in the country today.

Audience profile

"We have a different audience profile, which is between the ages of 16 and 35, from middle to lower middle classes," he adds. "Ang feeling ko, dapat mas mataas ang rating ng QTV, kasi mas ang target nila. Mas may pera ang audience na hinakabul ko. Ang one percent rating ng 'Desperate Housewives,' com-

pared to the 3 to 4 percent of another channel, may pambili sa lahat ng nag-a-advertise. So, we're not as concerned with ratings as others are."

But, Katigbak confirms that Studio 23 is beefing up its lineup of local shows by producing new ones and improving existing shows, like "Nguniig: The Hidden Files," which has been renamed "Nguniig! Paranormal Investigations." The show's new format now delves deeper into each case study and invites viewers to participate in its quests.

Streetboys' members Danilo Barrios, Zhong Hilario and Nico Manalo, who host "Nguniig," make the show more accessible to the youth. Katigbak explains, "If you check out the Internet, we get more feedback about 'Nguniig' now that it's on Studio 23 than when it was on Channel 2. The first version was a drama-

tization, while this one focuses on investigation."

At the same time, the nine-year-old UHF channel is bringing in current Hollywood top-rater, "The Ghost Whisperer," starring Jennifer Love Hewitt, which, contrary to its title, is more of a comedy than horror series, says Katigbak.

Acquisition

Another new acquisition that's likewise making waves in the States now is "Grey's Anatomy," a medical drama/comedy series featuring Ellen Pompeo, Sandra Oh and Patrick Dempsey.

Katigbak explains that foreign shows comprise only 30 percent of Studio 23's programming, while the rest is local programming that includes the coverage of the NCCA and UAAP games, movies and music-video shows courtesy of MYX. "But,

the bulk of our foreign shows fall on primetime, that's why people think we have few local programs," he avers.

Katigbak is proud of having popular fare like "24," "Survivor," "The Amazing Race," "Charmed," "Joey," and especially "Desperate Housewives" and "Smallville," which were shown on Studio 23 before cable network Star World aired them. But, he admits to having failed to secure the rights to "American Idol" and being a bit late in the airing of "CSI."

Complicated

"We negotiated for 'AI,' but it became complicated. With 'CSI,' never ako'ng mauuna kasi ang taas-taas ng binayaran ng AXN para mauuna sila sa buong Asia. It's a business arrangement. May bidding war pa about it," he shares.

Funniest role

In "Last Holiday," Queen Latifah plays what could be her funniest role, that of a woman named Georgia Byrd who has always bent over backwards for everyone else—but is going to do things strictly for herself from now on!

The reason is, she's been misdiagnosed to have only a few more months to live! So, she makes up for lost time and goes for her dream: The beautiful Grandhotel Pupp in Karlovy Vary, where she plans to go out with a bang!

For his part, ace comic Ryan

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For his part, ace comic Ryan

Tradition

Built in 1887, the steakhouse is a culinary icon in the city. It serves USDA prime porterhouse steaks.

The restaurant's owners go to the market daily to select the best loin of prime grade USDA beef, which is then aged and finally cut into huge steaks.

Part of the fun of getting there is taking the subway to Brooklyn, where the original restaurant is located.

We savored its pub-like atmosphere, with bare wooden tables that smelled of oak barrels. The wine list wasn't great, and there was only one seafood item and a lamb chop dish in the menu. So, I wondered why this place was so popular.

With Tessa, my brother-in-law Caloy and his wife, Charina, I ordered Porterhouse steaks, huge slices of tomatoes with sauce, and

WORD OF MOUTH

Sandy Daza

slices of thick bacon.

The tomato slices, dipped in Luger steak sauce, were good but nothing earth-shaking. The bacon slices were thick, not too crunchy, a bit chewy, but delicious.

But, the steaks were something else! They were huge, thick steaks, almost burnt on the outside, without any seasoning. The first bite didn't really impress me, but slowly, its prime meat started tasting better. The steak really grew on me.

This is how I like steak. Its taste should be able to stand on its own. It is hard to compare the steaks of the House of Prime Rib in San Francisco and Peter Luger Steakhouse in New York. Peter's is char-broiled, while the House's steak is slow-roasted. But, if I were to be given my last meal, I would still get it from the House of Prime Rib. Heaven! Check out their websites!

Happy eating!

Seminar on Film Review and Classification

THE CBCP OFFICE ON WOMEN is holding a CBCP-Cinema Seminar on Film Review and Classification for prospective reviewer-writers on April 21, 22 and 29 at the CBCP Compound, 470 Gen. Luna st., Intramuros, Manila. Call 527-1925 or 527-8031.

'The Colors of Arabica'

Nescafe Gold fires up the senses in its latest TV commercial, "The Colors of Arabica," directed by Jun Reyes of Unitel and conceptualized by Publicis Manila. It is a sensuous rendering of the stages that the Arabica beans go through—from the selection of the finest beans to the roasting

process that Nescafe has mastered, resulting in its fresh taste and intense aroma.

MONTAGE 'Angel Tales'

Every Sunday at 10 p.m. on Animax, "Angel Tales" follows the adventures of Gorou Mutsumi, a compassionate animal lover whose nine guardian angels—reincarnations of his former pets—suddenly appear to make his life better.

Camp ProGifted 2006

This summer promises to be an enriching time for preschoolers as Promil Pre-School presents Camp ProGifted 2006, a series of workshops for children three to seven years old. Discounts are

available to parents who present purchase receipts of Promil Pre-School 200g, 900g and 1.6kg. Register today at the SM Megamall Activity Center. Call 0906 440-8511.

'April Fools' Specials'

The Nickelodeon Channel's "April Fools' Specials" start with Zoey 101's "Prank Week," when the girls' dorm gets toilet-papered, prompting them to get even.

In "As Told by Ginger," Ginger sends a fake love letter from oddball student Dustin to Dodie, and later realizes that the joke's on her! And it's "bubble-blowing" time in Bikini Bottom when SpongeBob introduces his new talent to friends Patrick and Squidward. These



ABUEL. Plays Pontius Pilate in 'Golgota'.

prank-filled programs all happen today.

'Martir sa Golgota'

Tommy Abuel joins the cast of Lou Veloso's *cenaculo*, "Martir sa Golgota," as Pontius Pilate. He is joined by Ivy Violan as Mary,

SEMINAR/A3-4

Lessons learned from 'American Idol'

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST WEDNESDAY, THE 10 REMAINING "American Idol" finalists sang for their lives, but most of their performances were deemed too safe and predictable by the show's resident jurors—Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul, and the congenitally acerbic Simon Cowell.

Thus, last Thursday's elimination round was a cliffhanger for quite a number of the finalists, especially those who had gotten the most scathing negative comments the night before—Lisa Tucker, Keilee Pickler, Taylor Hicks, Chris Daughtrey and Bucky Covington.



TUCKER. Bids talent search goodbye.

Danger zone

That Kellie, Taylor and Chris had ended up in the danger zone was a surprise, because they were the three finalists whom Cowell had predicted would top the 2006 tilt.

For our part, we've said that our best bets are Lisa, Katharine McPhee and Paris Bennett, so Lisa's poor scores from the judges last Wednesday were cause for concern.

When the smoke finally cleared last Thursday, it turned out that the

latest evictee was Lisa. So, only two of our bets are still among next week's final nine.

At this point, it does little good to second-guess the show's text voters, because the competition has become really keen, and as many as 35 million votes are cast each week.

What the jurors say does seem to influence the voting viewers, but the numbers game has turned so complex that, for the five or so frontrunners, it's become practically anybody's contest.

So, instead of racking our brains and fraying our tarot cards to second-guess the judges, let's sum up the lessons that the "AI" finalists have learned from the months-long tilt thus far.

Major considerations

How are singing stars made? If you go by the jurors' comments from week to week, some of the major considerations are:

Select your songs very carefully.

ly, and choose numbers that showcase your voice and personality at their best.

Realize that the competition is keen, so never take your survival for granted. Don't rely too smugly on the strength of your fan and voting base.

Choose songs not just because you like them, but because they're good for you, so you can store heavily with the judges and

If you do a popular song, make sure you interpret it differently from the star singer who originally made it famous—or else, you'll suffer in comparison to him or her. Be unique, and keep showing a different side to your talent.

Hard work

And remember, if you win, that won't be the end to your hard work—in fact, you'll have to work even harder to make sure that your first album is a hit!

Come to think of it, these pointers aren't just for the 2006 "AI" finalists, but also for new singers who want to make it big anywhere.

So, new talents, go for it—but heed these words of wisdom from "AI's" garrulous musical gurus.

'Kerygma' on TV

A CATHOLIC PROGRAM ON RPN-9 that's a cut above the rest is "Kerygma TV," a 30-minute show that airs every Wednesday at 11:30 p.m. It is hosted by Catholic lay preacher Bo Sanchez and Kerygma magazine editor Rissa B. Singson.

"Kerygma," the most widely-circulated inspirational magazine in the country, has been around for 16 years, and is considered a "publishing miracle" because it thrives even without ads.

Candid

Candid and relaxed onscreen, Rissa is the perfect co-host to Bo. She spent most of her youthful years in Christian ministry.

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero



"I couldn't wait to finish college so I could serve the Lord full-time," she says. As a youth leader, missionary and preacher, she has traveled extensively here and abroad to proclaim the Good News.

Although she graduated from De La Salle with a degree in Computer Science, it was in publishing and TV where Rissa

found her niche.

Special

With "Kerygma TV," Rissa and Bo hope to reach out to more people. On Holy Thursday, "Kerygma TV" will air a one-hour tele-recreation special, "Dakilang Pag-ibig," from 11 a.m. to 12 noon on RPN-9.

The Mandy Navasero Summer Photoworkshop will start on April 8 and runs until May 27. A separate MN Batanes Photo Safari takes place from April 13 to 16, in cooperation with Fiesta Tours. Call 899-1767 or 896-3208.

E-mail: mandynavasero@yahoo.com



SINGSON. Perfect co-host to Bo Sanchez.

Baltazar

"If anyone were to ask you who you are, you could rightly say 'I am the Beloved of God.' And you wouldn't be wrong. That is the fundamental fact of our being."

"Love is a paradox. He who gives, receives."

And! "A Saint is one who keeps trying!"

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 ICE AGE 2 MTRCB GP 11:10 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00	3 BASIC INSTINCT 2 MTRCB R-16 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00 LMF
2 ICE AGE 2 MTRCB GP 12:05 2:15 4:25 6:35 8:45	4 JUST FRIENDS MTRCB R 3:10 4:20 8:00 NANNY MCPHEE MTRCB GP 2:00 5:40

PREMIERE THEATRE VENOM

MTRCB R-13 1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

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2ND MUTANT ACTION WEEK

MTRCB PG-13 Parents cautioned against bringing kids age 9 & below. Some may find some material troubling.

THE BLOOD WAR IS ON

ULTRAVIOLET

Distributed by COLUMBIA PICTURES

Journeys of Faith tours span the globe

ARLINA ONGLAO'S Journeys of Faith pilgrimage group has a full schedule of tours lined up for 2006. It started the year with a bang with "Following the Gospel Trail," a pilgrimage from Feb. 28 to March 20 that took pilgrims to holy and historical sites in Jordan, Israel, Turkey and Greece, with Msgr. Crispin Bernarte Jr. as pilgrimage chaplain.

Pilgrimage

Barely pausing to rest, Journeys of Faith next takes pilgrims to Jordan, Israel and Egypt from April 9 to 20. The "Holy Week in the Holy Land" pilgrimage covers Amman and Petra in Jordan, Nazareth, Tiberias, Cana, Mt. Tabor, Haifa, Jaffa, Ein Karen, Bethlehem, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv in Israel, and Sinai and Cairo in Egypt, with Fr. Melchor Balangao and Fr. Renato Jose Lopez, SSL.

From April 20 to May 5, "Great Marian Journeys" takes pilgrims and devotees to Portugal (Lisbon, Santarem, Fatima), Spain (Peñafrañca, Salamanca, Avila, Madrid, Zaragosa, Barcelona, Montserrat), and France (Lourdes, La Salette, Ars, Paray Le Monial, Nevers, Paris)—a project of Human Life International Asia, with Fr. Rudy Horst, STD.

May 7 to 16, "Rediscovering Russia" travels through Moscow, Novgorod, and St. Petersburg, with optional trips to Medjugorje or Turkey, with Bishop Raul Martinez, DD.

Sept. 5 to 18, "Enthraling

Eastern Europe" covers Poland (Czestochowa, Krakow, Wadowice, Auschwitz, Wlleska), Czech Republic (Prague, Cesky Krumlov), Austria (Vienna) and Hungary (Budapest).

Sept. 9 to 21, "Incredible India and the Himalayas" visits Nepal (Kathmandu), Tibet (Lhasa), and India (Kashmir, Delhi), with optional extension to the Taj Mahal in Agra, Khajuraho and Varanasi up to Sept. 27.

Medieval world

Oct. 16 to Nov. 1, "From the Ancient to the Medieval World" covers Turkey (Istanbul, Cappadocia, Konya, Pamukkale, Kusadasi, Izmir), Romania (Bucharest, Suceava, Sibiu, Brasov, Sinaia, Campina), with optional extension to Greece (Athens, Kalamata, Meteora, Souion), with Fr. Renato Jose Lopez, SSL.

Oct. 29 to Nov. 6, "Greece and Turkey Cruise" sails through Italy (Venice, Bari), Greece (Katacolon, Olympia), Turkey (Izmir, Istanbul) and Croatia (Dubrovnik).

Oct. 30 to Nov. 10, "Following the Gospel Trail (A Holy Land Pilgrimage Concert)" covers Jordan and Israel, with Fr. Renato Jose Lopez, SSL.

Nov. 8 to 18, "Ancient Egypt" visits Cairo, Sinai, the Nile, and Abu Simbel.

Call Arlina or Rona at (632) 929-0144, 929-0155, (632) 917-814-8127, telefax (632) 426-7295, or email journeyne/agmail.com.

'Edsa 1986'

the years to again move and inspire us today. There are heroes walking in our midst these days, and many of them—most of them otherwise "ordinary" people—are seen and quoted in "Edsa 1986."

Renewed relevance

The special employs other creative means to give the events of

1986 and earlier a cogency, vibrancy and renewed relevance that today's viewers can learn a lot from.

For these and other reasons, we urge ABS-CBN to telecast "Edsa 1986: Mga Ting ng Himagsikan" a repeat telecast as soon as possible, so that many more viewers, especially the youth, can benefit from its recollections, reminders and insights.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE-MALL

NOW SHOWING

1 VENOM 10:45 1:05 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:10 R13	2 LUCKY SLEVIN 1:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00 R16
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PROMENADE

GREENHILLS

NOW SHOWING

3 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00 GP	4 BASIC INSTINCT 2 11:15 1:35 4:10 6:25 8:50 R16	5 ICE AGE 2 12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00 GP
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SATURDAY Special



NOW SHOWING

Lost in cinematic translation

By Rito P. Asilo

"Rent"

D: Chris Columbus
S: Rosario Dawson,
Taye Diggs, Adam Pascal

CHRIS COLUMBUS' RETAINS most of "Rent's" original 1996 Broadway cast members (except Daphne Rubin-Vega and Fredi Walker) for his feature-film adaptation of Jonathan Larson's immensely popular Pulitzer and Tony-winning stage musical, which chronicles one year (from 1989 to 1990) in the life of bohemians living in the East Village in New York. The production's hapless, steel-piped guys are back—this time, immortalized on the big screen, and deservingly so: Nerdy filmmaker Mark (Anthony Rapp), the film's narrator, is still pinning for ex-girlfriend, Maureen (Idina Menzel), who's now in an on-again, off-again relationship with Harvard-educated lesbian lawyer, Maureen (Traci Thoms).

Mark's roommate is Roger (Adam Pascal), a tormented, HIV-positive musician who feeds off the advances of Mimi (Rosario Dawson)—a drug junkie cum exotic dancer (who's also HIV-positive).

Completing the flawed but feisty bunch are computer savvy Tom Collins (Jesse L. Martin) and his drag queen lover, Angel (Wilson Jermaine Heredia)—who are also both HIV-positive—and Benny (Taye Diggs), a former friend of Mark and Roger, who marnes for money. He is now the group's opportunistic land lord, who consistently torments them for their inability to pay the rent.

Ten years after "Rent's" trailblazing success on the legitimate stage, its issues remain undeniably real and scathingly relevant: AIDS, drug addiction, sexual revolution, urban poverty, love and fidelity, etc.

In sparklingly in-

Tribute to comedians

By Nestor U. Torre

THIS APRIL FOOLS' Day, let's pay tribute to our comedians, entertainers who gladly make idiots of themselves just to brighten our day. The best of the happy and hapless bunch include:

Billy Crystal

Jon Stewart did OK as the latest Oscars host, but the best emcee of the Academy Awards is still Billy Crystal.

Who can forget his musical spoofs of celebrities, his grandest of all grand entrances on horseback,

TRIBUTE/A4-3



CRYSTAL: Best emcee of the Oscars.

sured moments, Columbus' version still electrifies, and exudes the musical exuberance and topical earnestness of Larson's life-affirming message of "measuring life in love."

But, on its way to the big screen, the musical has lost some of its immediacy and its impassioned ability to imbue viewers with its "no day but today" slogan—you can't shake the Malthusian feeling that something is amiss.

A major flaw lies in the fact that most of the actors look more than a decade too old for the characters they're playing on the big screen.

Ironically, it's newcomer Dawson (who's a breath of fresh air)—along with Martin, Heredia and Diggs—who impresses with her screen presence and fresh, unstaged characterization.

Menzel looks like a sex-crazed, drugged-out junkie more than Dawson's Mimi. Thoms, for her part, just isn't believable as a lawyer—and makes her effort look like an exercise in play-acting.

Unfortunately, the protagonists' sentiments—despite their being encapsulated in rousing, memorably affecting songs—have a dated feel to them.

A successful musical usually draws its audience to its core, ensconced in its integrity and passion, but "Rent," the movie musical, falls into ennui when the actors aren't singing.

Yes, you will enjoy Columbus' earnest adaptation. But, passion and persuasive grit can't compensate for lack of plausibility. People can't look that old and still languish in problems that readily belong to confused, younger souls

who are still agonizing over the confounding forks in their respective roads.

Alas, 525,600 minutes of making mistakes don't—and shouldn't—last a lifetime. Soon thereafter, time and opportunity lapse for people who don't learn from them.

"Ice Age: The Meltdown"

D: Carlos Saldanha
S: Ray Romano, Denis Leary, John Leguizamo, Seann William Scott, Queen Latifah, Jay Leno

Although not as endearing nor as fetching as the original, Carlos Saldanha's animated feature is a timely, cautionary allegory that tackles global warming and, on a more intimate level, the importance of family and the indispensability of accepting one's true nature.

In the movie, the Ice Age is over—and Diego, the saber-

toothed tiger (Denis Leary), Manny, the mammoth (Ray Romano), Sid, the sloth (John Leguizamo), and Scratt (Chris Wedge), the hapless prehistoric squirrel/rat, along with Ellie (Queen Latifah)—a female mammoth who thinks she's a possum—and her "siblings," Crash (Seann William Scott) and Eddie (Josh Peck)—have to move to the other end of the valley before the huge glacial dam surrounding their valley breaks.

Their arduous journey to the other side becomes the adventure of a lifetime: It enables them to face their fears, accept one another's weaknesses, and rely on each other's strengths to stand up to the never-ending challenges that continually threaten to sever their intimate ties.

Indeed, this unlikely group has proven that there's strength in diversity. But, are loyalty and fraternity enough to save them from the wrath of Mother Nature?

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	ICE AGE 2 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 10:00 G
	VENOM 1:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 11:00 R-13

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THE NOTORIOUS
B.I.G. Fame and
notoriety even after
death.

Nothing new in posthumous album

By Noelani Torre

THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G. HAS BEEN DEAD for almost 10 years now, but he's still releasing records. Not as often as Tupac Shakur, but it's interesting to note that three of Biggie's four albums have been posthumous releases.

It's a bit grave-robbing-ish, but certainly not unexpected. Dead or alive, the Notorious B.I.G. has been one of rap's biggest names, and his legacy is such that you'd expect more than a few people to want to capitalize on it.

His debut album, "Ready to Die," took the charts by storm back in 1994, catapulting the 22-year-old Brooklyn street thug to instant fame and notoriety. The album went No. 1 and sold more than four million copies, resulting in Biggie's being dubbed as the "savior of East Coast rap."

During that same year, however, the star of West coast rap, Tupac Shakur, was robbed and shot while in New York. He survived the attack, and accused Sean "Puffy" Combs (who now calls himself Diddy) and Biggie of orchestrating the assault. They denied the charge, but the incident sparked the East Coast-West Coast war which culminated in a real-life tragedy.

In 1996, Tupac was killed in a drive-by shooting, and six months later, Notorious B.I.G. was also gunned down. Both murders remain unsolved to this day.

Weeks after his death, B.I.G.'s second and last official album, "Life After Death," was released, and it debuted at No. 1. In 1999, "Born Again," which contained unused material and loads of guest stars, hit the record stores. Now comes another such record, "Duets: The Final Chapter," which was released late last year.

Vault

Unlike "Born Again," much of the material in the album is more reused than unused. Biggie's vault, it appears, isn't as well-stocked as Tupac's. Still, there isn't a hip-hop star who wouldn't want to be associated with his name, and thus you'll find quite a few treats in this album.

The list of collaborators in "Duets," in fact, reads like a Who's Who of rap and hip-hop: Eminem, Diddy, Jay-Z, Snoop Dogg, Ludacris, Nelly, Mary J. Blige, Nas, R. Kelly, Missy Elliott, Bone Thugs N Harmony, Scarface and Biggie's widow, Faith Evans.

The dead—aside from the big man himself, that is—also make an appearance: Tupac and Bob Marley. And, at the end of the disc, Korn suddenly comes in from out of nowhere!

Presence

Despite—or because of—the presence of all these hip-hop heavies, Biggie himself is not present. Oh, he's there all right, but he doesn't sound there. What registers is more of an absence than a presence, particularly in tracks like "It Has Been Said."

Eminem unsurprisingly dominates, with Biggie contributing nothing more than a couple of "uh-huhs" and "ah-hahs" here and there.

If you're unfamiliar with B.I.G.'s work, this hodgepodge of a record won't be the best introduction. And if you're a fan, you won't find much of anything in it that you haven't heard before.

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JUST FRIENDS 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	VENOM 1:30 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	ICE AGE 2 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	ICE AGE 2 1:30 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50
NANNY MCPHEE 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	V FOR VENDETTA 7:30 / 9:30	ULTRAVIOLET 12:30 / 2:30 / 4:30 / 7:30 / 9:30	OVER 15+ ADULTS CLASS PLANNING PROGRAM

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ICE AGE 2 12:15 / 3:00 / 5:15 / 8:00 / 10:15	VENOM 12:40 / 2:40 / 4:40 / 7:40 / 9:40		

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JUST FRIENDS 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	VENOM R13 1:40, 3:40, 5:40, 7:40, 9:40	ICE AGE 2 12:00, 2:00, 4:00, 6:00, 8:00, 10:00

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ICE AGE 2

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3 ROOM

4 ROOM JUST FRIENDS
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4 ROOM ICE AGE-2

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6 ROOM VENOM

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V FOR VENDETTA

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2 ROOM ICE AGE

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4 BASIC INSTINCT 2

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Cinema 2000 Watermark

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2 MOMENTS OF L

3 ICE A

4 VEN

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2 ICE

3 VE

4 HOUSE OF

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2 MOMENTS OF

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(Mandaluyong) tel 7206100

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2

3

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3

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2 ICE AGE 2

3 BASIC INSTINCT 2

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2 VENOM

3 MOMENTS OF LOVE

4 LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

Cine Nepo

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2

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2

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2 MOMENTS OF

3 ULTRAM

Cinema 2000 Watermark

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1 MOMENTS OF LOVE

2 ICE AGE 2

3

4

THEATRES

1 ICE AGE 2

2

3

4

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Tribute to comedians

From page A4-1

and his ack-ack, ad-lib zingers when viewers were starting to yawn?

In his TV and film stardom, Billy similarly scores with his deadpan humor, perfect for the mod, urban comedies he's best at. For proof positive, take a look at "Analyze This," where he traded caustic barbs with Robert de Niro.

More recently, Billy has triumphed in a new field—the stage—with his hit one-man show that's based on his own tumultuous life and complex relationship with his father.

Reese Witherspoon

On the distaff side, let's hear it for Reese Witherspoon, who scored a comic hit with her "Legally Blonde" stardom, before she won her best actress Oscar for "Walk the Line."

Reese disarms viewers with her willingness—eagerness, even—to play bimbos with marshmallow minds and hearts full of fluff and stuff. However, her savvy performances make it clear that a great deal of intelligence and insight goes into the effective crafting of such "silly" portrayals.

Other star comics

Meanwhile, it's interesting to note that such formerly out-and-out comics like Tom Hanks, Robin Williams, Steve Martin and Jim Carrey have gone "serious" on us.

Some of their gambits for awards glory have been successful, but we



CARREY. It's harder to make people laugh than to shed a noble tear.

trust that they won't forget that it's harder to make people laugh than to shed a noble tear.

Thankfully, comedienne feel less need to assert their claims to solemn-faced stardom, so we continue to occasionally enjoy the zany performances of Bette Midler, Goldie Hawn, Diane Keaton, Geena Davis, Ellen DeGeneres, Kirstie Alley, Sondra Bernhard, and Sandra Bullock—not to mention the in-ventive comedy of Paris Hilton, and even the otherwise venerable Meryl



WITHERSPOON. A great deal of intelligence goes into her "silly" portrayals.

Streep, when she's in the mood to madly kick up her heels!

'SNL' graduates

While we're at it, let's toast "Saturday Night Live" and its 25-year record of developing so many stellar comics, including its latest major find, Steve Carell.

More than any comedy school, "SNL" has kept our screens delightfully supplied with exceptional new comics who make April Fools' Day a date truly worth celebrating!

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Amanda BYNES



SMITH. From matchmaker to thief.

Will Smith plays charming thief in new film

LOS ANGELES—Will Smith has stolen a role as a charming thief in a new movie about a man blackmailed into committing crime for his country.

TV series

Smith, 37, who won an Academy Award nomination for his leading role in 2001's boxing drama, "Ali," will take the lead role in a feature film adaptation of a four-decade-old US television series, "It Takes a Thief," Daily Variety said.

The movie, based on the series that ran from 1968 to 1970 and starred Robert

WILL/A4-4

NOW SHOWING IN THE FOLLOWING THEATERS:

GLORietta 1&4 GREENBELT 1&3 POWERPLANT Shangri-La Gateway Festival Alabang Town Robinson's (ERMITA, GALLERIA, METROEAST, PIONEER, NOVALICHES, LETRE) CINERAMA Goleco City ROSEN WalterMart MAKATI Market-Market EastWood BLUEWAVE Sta Lucia Starmall ABC. All Mall Greenhills REMAR Metropolis Goleco GRAND Goleco COMMONWEALTH Masagana PASAY (CEBU) Ayala E-Mall Orla Cinema Cinelux Cinema (DAVAO) Gaizano Victoria JS NCCC

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SHARON STONE

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VERSUS
THE BAD BOYS**

FEAR NO MAN

**SALMA HAYEK
PENÉLOPE CRUZ**

BANDIDAS

OPENS APRIL 3



Will Smith...

From page A4-3

Wagner will tell the story of a rogue who was blackmailed by his country into working for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Universa Studios has been mulling over the movie for nearly 10 years, after originally marking it as a starring vehicle for Michael Douglas.

Smith has also starred in such hits as the "Men in Black" films, "Independence Day," and last year's comedy, "Hitch." AFP

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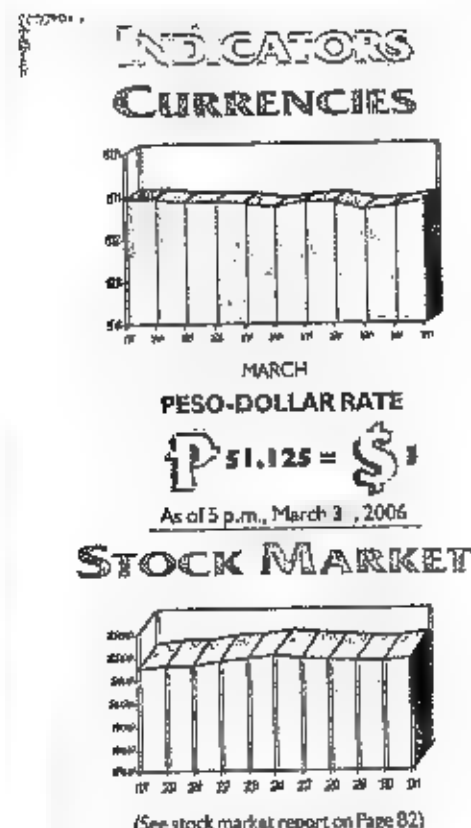
BUSINESS

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Donors tell RP: Curb corruption, spend more



Gov't must ensure economic benefits reach more people

By Doris C. Dumlaog

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE INTERNATIONAL DONOR COMMUNITY yesterday urged the government to plug expenditure leakages caused by corruption and free up more funds for vital infrastructure and social spending.

At the close of the 27th annual meeting with the country's official development assistance (ODA) partners, multilateral and bilateral donors from 18 countries proposed specific measures to allow a bigger number of Filipinos to benefit from progress made on the fiscal front.

Government economic managers led by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and Trade Secretary Peter Pavila, in a briefing after the Philippine Development Forum here, said initiatives had been rolled out to address the concerns raised by the country's ODA partners.

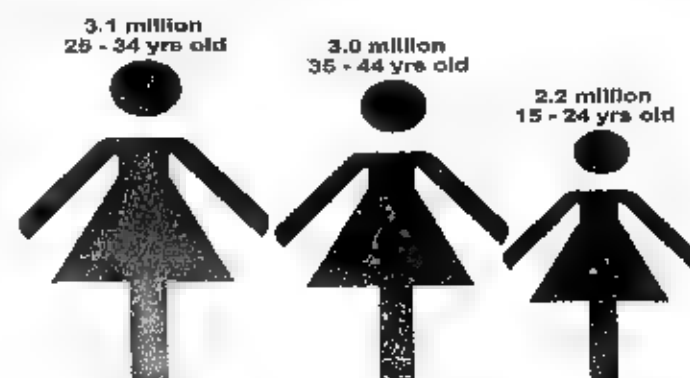
DONORS/B2

INQUIRER MONITOR

Figures that matter in our nation's life

Working Filipinas

Women comprised 38 percent of the country's total labor force of 35.2 million and majority of the 12.4 million employed women are between 25-44 years old



Source: National Statistics Office
Chona Galang PDI Research

Foreign debt burden down to \$54.2B in end-2005

THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN DEBT LOAD registered with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, mostly consisting of public sector borrowings, stood at \$54.2 billion in end-2005, equivalent to about half of the country's total economic output.

The external debt burden was down by 1.2 percent from the \$54.8 billion a year ago and by 2.3 percent from the \$55.5 billion a quarter ago or in end-September 2005, BSP Governor Aman-

do Terangco Jr. reported yesterday.

The decline in the Philippine debt stock on a quarter-on-quarter basis resulted from some \$832 million in net repayments made and \$711 million in foreign exchange revaluation adjustment on non-US dollar denominated obligations, particularly those in Japanese yen, which depreciated against the greenback.

But the slowdown was tempered by a

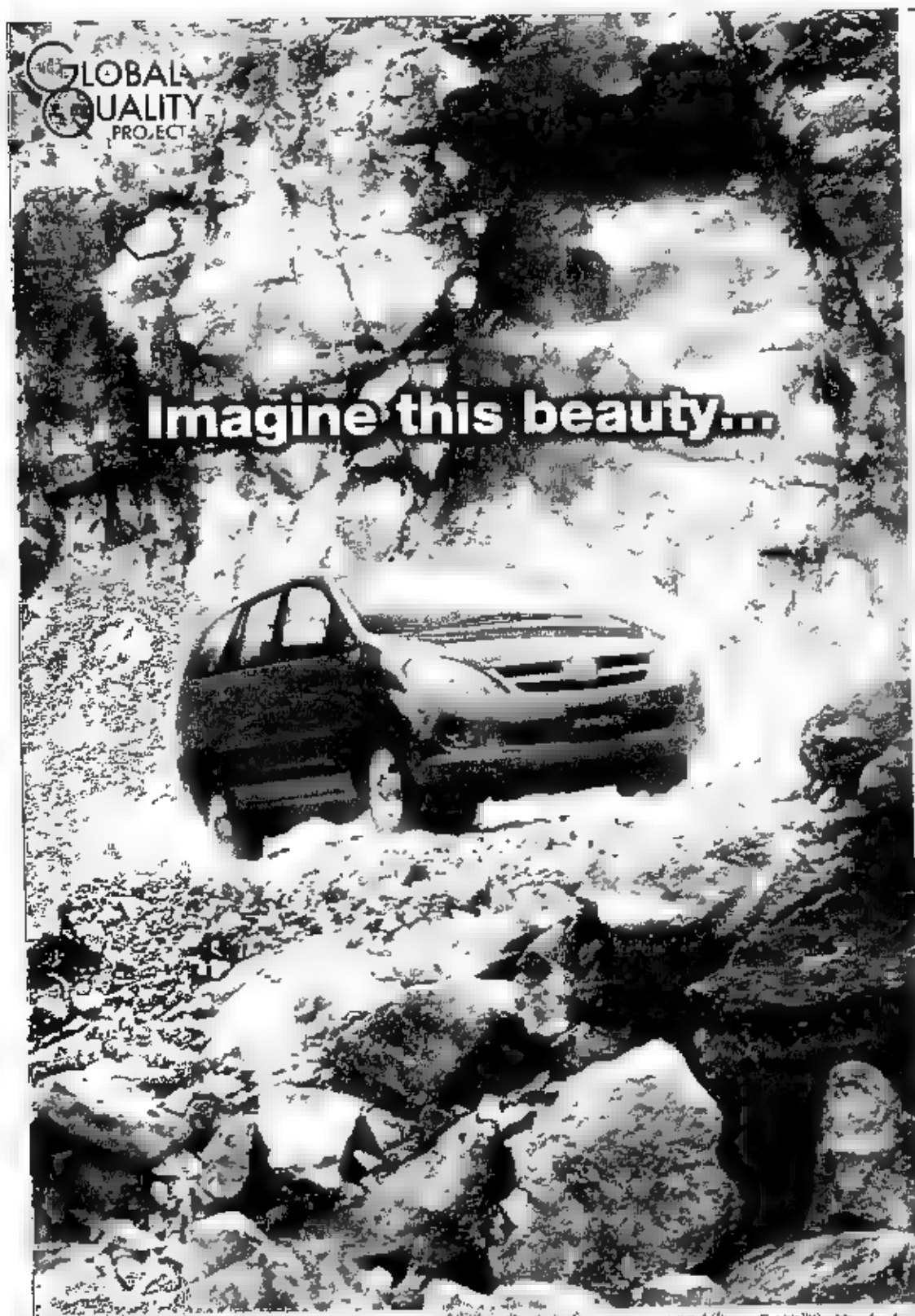
\$252-million increase in offshore Philippine debt paper bought by foreign investors from local residents. When the government or some private companies issue offshore bonds, the portion bought by local investors is excluded from the foreign debt stock computation.

The foreign debt figure approved and registered by the BSP excluded offshore borrowings by non-bank private sector entities—which are free to con-

tract external debts for as long as they do not source foreign currency from the banking system in servicing those debts.

The country's external debt ratio, or total outstanding debts as a percentage of gross national product, was estimated at 51.5 percent at end-2005, shrinking by 8 percentage points from the 59.5 percent ratio a year ago.

FOREIGN/B2



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TOP Platform

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Gov't plans \$774-M bond swap

New securities to be issued in exchange for Reagan-era Brady bonds

By Doris C. Dumalao

THE GOVERNMENT PLANS TO retire up to \$774 million worth of remaining Brady bonds—which date back to the country's painful debt crisis years—by issuing new global bonds in exchange for outstanding IOUs as soon as possible.

The Brady bonds were named after Nicholas Brady, the Treasury chief of the United States during the term of President Ronald Reagan. Brady proposed the issuance of bonds to help heavily indebted countries like the Philippines restructure their commercial debts in the 1980s.

The Philippines has outstanding Brady bonds maturing up to 2017 and 2018, but there are shorter tenors maturing as early as 2007 and 2008.

Government officials yesterday said that the proposed global bond exchange program was submitted for approval to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' policy-making Monetary Board.

One official said that the national government would like to redeem the outstanding Brady bonds in full, hoping to cut on interest expenses by retiring the expensive debts.

Another official said that the government could choose to retire everything, or just part of the remaining issuance.

The first time the government did a Brady bond swap was in 1996, or prior to the Asian currency turmoil, when it retired about \$680 million worth of outstanding Brady bonds.

Other bond exchanges for the same securities were done in 1999 and in 1994.

The government plans to embark on this fresh bond swap involving foreign currency denominated bonds or ROPs to boost trading liquidity of benchmark securities, riding on the success of a similar initiative on local issuances.

It earlier bought back P111 billion worth of peso-denominated government securities with new instruments concentrated in three-, five- and seven-year maturities.

The government's bond exchange program aims to retire securities which are not actively traded in the secondary market and replace them with securities of tenor most demanded by the market.



THERE will be changes on the trading floor as the PSE adopts a new index to be called PSEI.

PSE to change index composition

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A NEW PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE index will take effect on April 3, based on the PSE's new criteria using a listed firm's available shares to the public.

As an offshoot of a review of the PSE's 238 listed firms, property firm Empire East Land Holdings Inc., and Manila Mining Corp. were included in the new index, bumping off cement firm Holcim Philippines Inc., and Pilipino Telephone Corp.

A total of 30 companies were chosen to comprise the new index to be dubbed PSEI.

The listed firms passed the PSE's review which tested them against a new set of criteria.

These are: Holding firm

Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc., television network ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp., conglomerate Ayala Corp. and property arm Ayala Land Inc.

Sy-controlled Banco de Oro Universal Bank, second largest Bank of the Philippine Islands, property developer Belle Corp., holding firm Benpres Holdings Corp.

Fixed and mobile phone carrier Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc., construction giant DMCI Holdings Inc., real-estate firm Empire East Land Holdings Inc., third largest Equitable PCI Bank Inc.

Property developer Filinvest Land Inc., power and tollroads firm First Philippine Holdings Corp., mobile phone network Globe Telecom Inc., port opera-

tor International Container Terminal, fast food giant Jollibee Foods Corp., gold explorer Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company.

Power distributor Manila Electric Company, Manila Mining Corp., utility firm Manila Water Company Inc., holding firm Megaworld Corp., diversified company Metro Pacific Corp., largest bank Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company.

Oil firm Petron Corp., Phillex Mining Corporation, dominant telephone firm Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co., food and beverage giant San Miguel Corporation, holding company SM Investments Corp. and its mall operator SM Prime Holdings Inc.

PBCom gets SEC nod to hike capital

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE Commission (SEC) yesterday Philippine Bank of Communications proposal to raise its capital to P17.5 billion.

According to documents it filed with the SEC, PBCom was given the greenlight to increase its authorized capital—consisting of common and preferred shares—by P3 billion from P14.5 billion.

Also, the bank's subscribed and paid-up capital will be increased to P8.26 billion from P5.26 billion.

The bank's influential Chinese owners will subscribe to the P3 billion increase, led by International Copra Export Corp. (P1.2 billion) of the Luy family, Telengtan Brothers & Sons Inc. of the Chung family (P685.6 million), La Suerte Workers Cooperative

Fund (P176.4 million) and bank vice chair Ralph Nubla Jr. (P938 million).

In March 2004, the bank's three major owners infused fresh capital of P3 billion into the bank to boost its capital base to P9 billion.

As of 2004, the Luy Group held 37 percent, the Nubla Group 28 percent, and the Chung Group 27 percent. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of March 31, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
Asean Bank Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	4,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	26	26	26	26	371,330
Bank of Commerce	82	82	82	82	2,189,100
China Banking Corp.	685	685	685	685	1,300
Citibank Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	600
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	14,870,000
Equity Bank Inc.	75.5	75.5	75.5	75.5	77,300
International Exch. Bank	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	1,100,000
Manila Banking Corp.	38.5	38.5	38.5	38.5	700
Phil. Bank of Commerce	34	34	34	34	12,000
Phil. Savings Bank	40	40	40	40	10,000
Rural Bank of Luzon	13.25	13.25	13.25	13.25	42,000
Security Bank Corp.	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	36,300
Union Bank of the Phil.	30.5	30.5	30.5	30.5	15,000
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	27	27	27	27	56,200
Manulife Financial Corp.	3200	3210	3200	3210	130,000
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1	1	1	1	5,800
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	1.88	1.70	1.88	1.70	5,300
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2150	2185	2150	2185	3,700,000
Veritas Corp.	0.96	0.97	0.94	0.96	
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, MINES & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	44.5	45	44.5	45	144,500
First Phil. Hloga Corp.	45.5	46.5	45.5	46.5	1,123,000
Manila Electric Co. A	12	12.25	12.25	12.25	0,000
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20.75	20.75	20.75	65,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.6	5,200,000
Petron Corp.	4.4	4.45	4.25	4.4	6,300,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	530,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	2,000
Golden Field Corp.	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	222,000
Pal. House Inc.	4	4	4	4	86,300
R. M. Corp.	0.7	0.74	0.7	0.74	50,000
R. M. Holdings Inc.	2.48	2.55	2.48	2.55	1,400,000
S. M. Corp. A	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15	5,000
S. M. Corp. B	80	80.5	80.5	80.5	37,300
S. M. Corp. C	81	81	81	81	25,000
United Hobbies Corp.	18	18	17.75	17.75	21,400
Vitacorp	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	2,900,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	250,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.42	1.46	2,000,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.1	4.1	4	4	5,045,000
CHEMICALS					
Corro-Cold Inc.	1.28	1.3	1.28	1.3	30,000
Ever-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.75	2,000
OVERSEAS INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	0.0675	200,000
Macdonald Plastics Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	40,000
Manulife Manufacturing	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	280,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.007	155,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0075	0.0075	0.007	0.0075	3,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg C	355	355	355	355	20,490
Aboliz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	1,000
Ajo. Net Holdings Inc.	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	1,000,000
Ajo. Net Holdings Inc. A	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	5,000
APC Group Inc.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	16,000
Acorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.87	10,000
Anglo Phil. Holdings Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	55,000
Bacotan Cons. Indus. Inc.	0.99	1	0.99	1	2,900,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.5	10,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	44,000
Flanvest Dev. Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.9	2,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.245	0.245	0.245	32,000
Manulife Holdings	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	8,000
Multichem Inc. Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	1,000
Pacific	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.245	1,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	1,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.14	0.145	0.14	0.14	8,000
Sinagold Corp.	228	228	228	228	1,130,000
SM Investments Corp.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	21,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.0575	0.0575	0.055	0.055	2,000,000
Univ. Res. & Holdings Co.	10.75	11.25	10.75	11.25	14,863,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	1.2	1.14	1.1	1.14	14,800,000
Belle Corp.	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.29	2,000
Cebu Equities Inc.	1.84	1.82	1.84	1.82	2,500,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.78	1.8	35,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	30,000
Cebu Prop. Vest. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	1,200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	18,000
EL Realty Developers Inc.	0.54	0.55	0.54	0.54	17,800
Empire East Land Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.28	1.28	7,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	1,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	1,000
Interport Res.	0.225	0.225	0.225	0.225	1,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	14,000
Phil-Estate Land Inc.	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	2,000
Marshall Cons. Inc. A	1.5	1.52	1.48	1.5	8,400
Marshall Cons. Inc. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	73,000
Marshall Cons. Inc. C	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	58,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	43,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.29	3,320,000
Philinvest and Holdings	1.54	1.54	1.54	1.54	3,000
SM Development Corp.	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	74,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.125	0.13	7,110,000
Univ. Res. & Holdings Co.	11.5	12.25	11.5	12.25	245,300
SERVICE					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.36	1.36	1,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.98	1,780,000
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	880	880	880	880	74,250
Globe Telecom Inc.	2.88	2.88	2.8	2.85	8,660,000
Phil. Tel. Corp.	1910	1930	1910	1925	242,040
Phil. Lang. Tel. Co.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	150,000
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.048	0.05	0.048	0.05	80,000
ISM Communications Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	600,000
Muscat Semiconductors Corp.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	200,000,000
Philweb Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	889,000
Asian Terminals Inc.	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	725,000
Phil. Container Term. Sv.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	927,000
Acelella Phils. Hotel Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	800,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3	3	3	3	1,150,000
Manila Jockey Club	0.28	0.3	0.28	0.3	1,560,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.44	
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	5,000
Centro Escolar University	645	645	645	645	2,850
Far Eastern University	2.04	2.1	2	2	1,021,000
Maxxis Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	2,540,000
Philcomtel Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	4,000
MINING					
Aper Mining Co. Inc. A	1.22	1.25	1.22	1.28	1,584,000
Aper Mining Co. Inc. B	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	130,000
Atlas Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	745,000
Atlas Cons. Min. & Dev.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	33,000
Benquet Corp. A	25	25	25	25	1,000
Benquet Corp. B	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.23	46,300,000
Lepanto Cons. Min. Co. A	0.26	0.28	0.26	0.27	29,000
Lepanto Cons. Min. Co. B	0.019	0.021	0.019	0.02	606,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.029	0.026	0.028	51,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	60,000
DMCO Corp.	2.65	2.65	2.65	2.65	11,000
Philinvest Mining Corp. A	2.7	2.75	2.65	2.7	13,000
Philinvest Mining Corp. B	25.5	26	25.5	26	1,000
Samitara Mining Corp.	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	800,000
Oil					
Bank Compagnie Ind.	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.026	1,570,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.008	0.0075	0.008	15,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	15,000
The Philoil Corp. A	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	30,000
Petroleum Res. Corp.	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series A	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
ABS-CBN Hlghs. Corp. (Pw)	11.5	12	11.5	11.75	482,400

Quaranties

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Quaranties
United States	Dollar	0.821558	1.000000	51,2840

Gov't urged to issue clearer policy on free trade

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ADVOCATES FOR FAIR TRADE yesterday urged the government to come up with a clearer policy direction on trade as the World Trade Organization plods on with the latest round of negotiations in Geneva.

The Fair Trade Alliance said negotiators should take a stronger stance on keeping as much "policy space" as possible regarding tariff cuts under talks on non-agricultural market access (NAMA).

Mario Jose Sereno, who represents the industrial sector in FTA,

Negotiators seek cap on average tariff cuts for key products

said in a press briefing that clarity was needed to guide negotiators for the country considering that they had no definite statement on figures they were pushing for.

"They should set a cap on the average tariff cuts for items that have already been committed for reduction, say 25 percent," Sereno said.

"They should also set a minimum for a new average tariff level that would result from the new agreements, such as 23.4 percent or

the average commitment under the previous round of talks," he added.

In a prepared statement, FTA said the government should push for a high coefficient or number that would determine how much tariffs should be cut based on the so-called Swiss formula of computation.

"This remains the only element open for the Philippines to preserve its policy space or flexibility in the ongoing negotiations," FTA said.

The group stressed that such

flexibility was important for the country to promote certain strategic industries needed for long-term development.

Shalimar Vitan, policy director for United Kingdom-based advocacy group Oxfam, said all countries that successfully industrialized used tariff protection to develop their industrial base, including the UK, United States, Germany and even the so-called East Asian Tigers.

"Ambitious and fast-track liberal-

ization of trade, especially of fish products and industrial goods, would be disastrous for Filipinos and would surely be a recipe for increased poverty," Vitan said.

Oxfam supported the position of 11 developing economies who argued that they should be allowed to implement less drastic tariff cuts compared to developed countries to protect their industries.

The 11 include Argentina, Brazil, Egypt, India, Indonesia,

Namibia, South Africa, Tunisia, Venezuela and the Philippines.

"We support this position as it is a good indicator that the developing countries are pushing for the principle of less than full reciprocity in the Doha Development Round," Vitan said.

"Government negotiators should uphold and push for special and differential treatment in this round," Vitan added.

She said the Philippines would likely get access to only 5 percent of total tariff lines in the non-agricultural products including fisheries.

EMERGING TREND

More home-based call centers seen rising

By Daxim L. Lucas

MOST CALL CENTERS WILL EVOLVE OVER the next three years from present office-based establishments to "on-demand" networks.

These will be based in different locations—including homes—and can offer more services, according to an expert on global trends in the business process outsourcing (BPO).

Speaking to reporters, consulting firm Yankee Group's managing director Sheryl Kingstone said an emerging trend in the BPO sector was the use of so-called on-demand and hosted models.

These will define the next generation infrastructure for outsourced call center operations.

Kingstone visited Manila this week to discuss industry trends in the information and technology sectors and the future of call centers in the Philippines and India.

On-demand or "software as service" (SaaS) is a software delivery model that allows companies of any size to build a contact center anywhere in the world without the large, up-

front investments normally associated with putting up a call center business.

Instead of focusing on the physical infrastructure as in most call centers in the country today, the on-demand delivery system allows any establishment to deliver customer relations management services using the software of a host company through the Internet.

A relatively new model, SaaS allows a company to reduce the maintenance, daily technical operation and support of business and consumer software.

According to Kingstone, corporations will be challenged to keep pace with technology requirements and their associated costs.

As such, outsourcers will require better technology.

"Businesses will not choose an outsourcer with outdated technology," she said. "Sophisticated business will demand sophisticated capabilities to meet customer requirements."

She said another industry trend is the increasing use of voice over Internet protocol (VoIP) in outsourcing.

She predicted that call centers and BPO companies would begin to switch to VoIP in the near future to slash costs and offer more services.

VoIP allows the transmission of digital voice data over the Internet.

This allows users to make phone calls using broadband Internet connections instead of regular phone lines.

Kingstone said on-demand delivery and VoIP are two outsourcing models which have evolved to offer sophisticated services, and not just "butt-in-seat" services.

One company that enables call centers and BPO firms to fully tap the features of VoIP and on-demand models is Five9 Inc., an international call center solutions provider that has chosen the Philippines as the site of its regional headquarters in Southeast Asia.

Last year, Five9 introduced its virtual contact center product which allows small organizations to start a call center with minimal capital.

It is currently used by over 1,000 clients worldwide.



OPERATIVES from the Optical Media Board inspect the stacks of pirated audio and video discs found in a store in Lucena City, which they claimed was the biggest outlet of pirated discs in Southern Tagalog.

OMB, CIDG raid outlet selling pirated software

LUCENA CITY—COMBINED OPERATIVES from the Optical Media Board (OMB) and Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) raided a suspected outlet of illegal audio and video discs and computer software located in the central part of the city and confiscated more than 100 sacks of pirated materials.

Sergio Valdez, OMB Enforcement Unit deputy chief, identified the outlet as Delic Play Station Center at Profugo Street near the St. Ferdinand Cathedral.

"Compared to other raided establishments, this is one of the biggest outlets of pirated materials in Southern Tagalog. It sources its pirated stocks of CDs, VCDs, DVDs and computer software from Manila. Sometimes, it gets them from foreign sources," Valdez said.


Armed with a search warrant from a regional trial court here, police headed by Supt. Ricardo Sto. Domingo Jr., CIDG Anti-Fraud and Commercial Crimes Division official, worked for about 20 minutes before they were able to open the steel lock of the establishment.

Once the iron folding door was opened, stacks of thousands of pirated audio, video discs and computer software greeted the raiding team that included local police team and barangay officials.

Valdez said the raid was part of the Philippine Anti-Piracy Team, which was set up to promote awareness of intellectual property rights and curb piracy in the country.

The Philippines was on the priority watch list of countries that do not properly enforce intellectual property rights from 2001 to 2006.

The United States government recently removed the Philippines from the priority watch list and placed on the ordinary watch list in recognition of efforts to curb piracy in the country. Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau



NEECO II

NUEVA ECILJA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
Calapitan, Talavera, Nueva Ecija
Tel./Fax: 044-411-1007
Email: neeco2@digitalone.com

The Nueva Ecija II Electric Cooperative, Inc. now invites Sealed Bids from eligible bidders to bid assorted scrap (iron/steel), unserviceable electrical equipment/devices office equipment and unserviceable vehicles.

The Bidding Documents may be purchased from Nueva Ecija II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (NEECO II) Main Office, Calapitan, Talavera, Nueva Ecija, Philippines, upon submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of non-refundable fee of THREE THOUSAND PESOS ONLY (P 3,000.00) in cash beginning April 3, 2006.

Sealed proposal will be received by the NEECO II-Committee on Disposal of Non-Performing Assets at NEECO II Main Office on or before 2:00 p.m. May 4, 2006 at which time and place of said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of Bidders or Bidders' authorized representatives who choose to attend. Late submission will not be accepted.


Pre-bid Conference and inspection of scrap materials will be conducted at the NEECO II Main Office at 2:00 p.m. on April 28, 2006.

All bids submitted must be accompanied by a bid security of not less than ten (10%) percent of the total bid price.

The NEECO II hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informalities therein and to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the cooperative.

(Sgd.) ENGR. JOSEPHINE L. BADIOLA
Chairperson, Committee on Disposal

(PDI - April 01 & 08, 2006)



REPUBLICA NG PILIPINAS KAGAWARAN NG KATARUNGAN PANGASIWAAN SA PATALAN NG LUPAIN (LAND REGISTRATION AUTHORITY) East Avenue cor. NIA Road Quezon City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

**Construction of the Registry of Deeds Building
Of Guiguinto and Meycauayan, Bulacan**

The Land Registration Authority (LRA), through the Special Allocation Release Order (SARO) No. C-05-07980 dated December 29, 2005, intends to apply the following amounts, to wit:

Project	Location	PCAB License	Contract Duration	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
RD Bldg., Guiguinto, Bulacan	Sta. Rita, Guiguinto, Bulacan	Medium "A"	6 mos.	P 8,000,000.00
RD Bldg., Meycauayan, Bulacan	Barna Iba, Meycauayan, Bulacan	Medium "A"	6 mos.	P 7,000,000.00

the same being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Construction of the above infrastructure projects. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

JRA now invites potential Bidders to apply for eligibility for the Construction of the Registry of Deeds Building of Guiguinto and Meycauayan, Bulacan. Bidders should possess a valid PCAB license applicable to the above type and cost of the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and meet the other minimum requirements stated in the eligibility forms. Applications for eligibility will be evaluated on a "pass/fail" basis. The deadline for submission of eligibility documents shall be on or before April 28, 2006. Only those Bidders passing the eligibility check will be entitled to purchase the Bidding Documents.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act, and is restricted unless otherwise stated to organizations with at least seventy-five percent (75%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines. In accordance with IRR Part A of R.A. 9184, only Bids from Bidders who pass an eligibility check will be opened. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who will be determined as such during post-qualification.

Interested Bidders shall secure the Eligibility Documents from the BAC Secretariat at the address stated below, on April 17 - 21, 2006 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of FIVE HUNDRED (P500.00) PESOS. They shall submit the accomplished Eligibility documents, in order for these to be received by the BAC Secretariat at the same address, on April 24 - 28, 2006.

Interested eligible Bidders may obtain additional information from the Land Registration Authority and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on April 24-28, 2006.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by the Bidders who passed the eligibility check upon presentation of the Notice of Eligibility to the BAC Secretariat, at the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PESOS: THREE THOUSAND (P3,000.00). The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before May 9-12, 2006.

The LRA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on May 19, 2006 at the LRA Multi-Purpose Hall, 5/F LRA Building, East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City, at the following schedule, to wit:

Project	Time
RD Bldg., Guiguinto, Bulacan	10:00 a.m.
RD Bldg., Meycauayan, Bulacan	1:30 p.m.

Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the above address on or before May 28, 2006 at the following schedule, to wit:

Project	Time
RD Bldg., Guiguinto, Bulacan	10:00 a.m.
RD Bldg., Meycauayan, Bulacan	1:30 p.m.


All bids must be accompanied by a bid security in the form and amount indicated in the Bidding Documents. Late bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall then follow after such submission on May 28, 2006. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the above address.

LRA reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

22 March 2006 at Quezon City

(Sgd.) RONALDO A. ORTILE
Chairman
JRA Bids and Awards Committee on Infrastructure
5/F LRA Building, East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel/Fax No. 924-4733

(PDI - April 1 & 15, 2006)



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DUTY FREE PHILIPPINES, a division of the Philippine Tourism Authority is inviting interested buyers to bid on the following unserviceable properties on an "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS"

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All interested parties may secure the bidding guidelines and bid form for a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) from April 4 to 8, 2006 from the Administrative Department, Ground Floor EHA Building, Fiestamall, Ninoy Aquino Avenue, Parañaque City


Submission of duly accomplished and sealed bid documents will be until April 12, 2006 at 5:00 PM. A pre-bidding conference and site inspection for all qualified bidders will be announced later

Bidders will be required to post a bid bond equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the total bid price in the form of Cash, Manager's Check or Cashier's Check

Duty Free Philippines reserves the right to confiscate the bid bond should the winning bidder refused to accept his award. Further, DFP reserves the right to reject any or all bids or any part thereof, waive any defect contained therein and accept an offer most advantageous to the government.

(Sgd.) JOEL R. PEREZ
Chairman
Disposal Committee

(PDI - April 1 & 2, 2006)



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM

East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. (632) 920-6407/(632) 920-6446
E-mail: sssmail@info.com.ph Web site: http://www.sss.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

PABX SYSTEMS FOR VARIOUS SSS BRANCHES
Supply, delivery, installation & customization of five (5) sets of PABX System

1. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM intends to apply the sum of P5,200,000.00 consisting of the following:

Item	Description	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Source of Fund
Item #1	5 sets PABX System at P900,000.00/set	P 4,500,000.00	2006 Budget for Capital Expenditures - PABX System
Item #2	3-year Maintenance Service at P240,000.00/yr/set	P 1,200,000.00	Budget for Operating Expenditures - MR
	TOTAL	P 5,200,000.00	

being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), to payments under the contract for PABX System for the following SSS Branches: Makati, San Pablo, Naga, Cagayan de Oro, and Davao. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The SSS now invites Bids from eligible bidders for the supply, delivery, installation and customization of five (5) sets of PABX System for various SSS Branches. Supply, delivery, installation and customization of the GOODS is required within sixty (60) calendar days after contract signing/acceptance of purchase order. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section 3 of the Bidding Documents. Instruction to Bidders (ITB).

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary financial criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges in Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) and subject to Commonwealth Act 156 (C.A. 156). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section 3 of the Bidding Documents. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of P5,000.00. The method of payment will be on cash basis payable at the SSS Cashiering Department, SSS Main Bldg. Ground floor upon accomplishment of SSS Form R-4. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

6. The SSS will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on April 21, 2006 at 1:30pm, at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City.

7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Building on or before May 02, 2006 at 3:00pm. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in a form and amount indicated in the Bid Tender Documents. Late bids shall not be accepted.

8. Bid opening shall be held on May 05, 2006 at 1:00pm, at the Green Room, 12th Floor, SSS Main Bldg., East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the given address.

9. The SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bid and Awards Committee
The Secretariat
6th Floor, SSS Main Building
East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel # 924-7291/ 924-7380/ 924-6441 local 5491
E-mail: bac@sss.gov.ph
Facsimile number - (02) 924-7380

**THE CHAIRMAN
BIDS & AWARDS COMMITTEE**

(PDI - April 1, 2006)

DA officials see growing market for RP potatoes

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE country's potatoes are now being exported in the form of chips and strips.

Agriculture officials said, however, that local production has yet to account for a portion of the demand by food chains because current potato varieties could not be processed into snacks, particularly French fries.

Roy Imperial, a director of the high value cash crops program of the Department of Agriculture, said local and foreign food chains in the country therefore continued to import potatoes for their food preparations.

and low cost so we could compete with imported potatoes," he said.

Tony Cruzado of the Metro Manila-based GTDF Corp., a vegetable supplier, said the capital has more than 10 food chains that needed at least 200 metric tons of potatoes, carrots and cabbage a month.

He said, however, that local potatoes paled in comparison with the imported "Atlantic" variety preferred by food chains.

He said the only way to compete with imported varieties was to develop local planting materials that could match the requirements of food chains for processed potatoes.

University here, said local potatoes

were finding markets abroad.

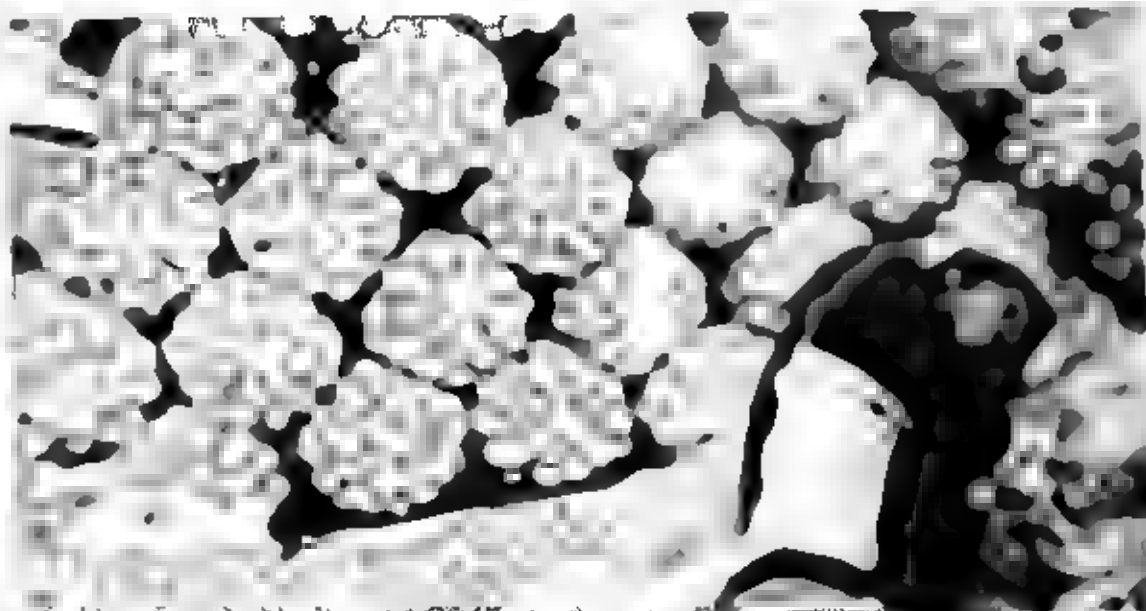
Data from the DA's Bureau of Agricultural Statistics showed that the country exported 23 metric tons of white potatoes worth P3.73 million from July to December 2005.

The potatoes, mostly brought to the United States, were mainly in the form of ready-to-eat potato chips, strings and strips.

But from the same period last year, the country imported 30,413 metric tons of potatoes worth P860 million.

These imported potatoes were packaged and labeled as "prepared or preserved otherwise than by vinegar or acetic acid and frozen," indicating that they are for pro-

FBI Northern Luzon Bureau



NAP TIME A porter at the La Trinidad Vegetable Trading Post in La Trinidad, Benguet takes a much-awaited break while waiting his turn to load potatoes on vegetable delivery trucks bound for Metro Manila.

Share our vision of the future

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2006

BUSINESS

B3

Japanese firms moving factories out of China to Asean, survey shows

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE LATEST SURVEY OF JAPANESE FIRMS operating in Southeast Asia and India indicated a spate of relocation with China-based manufacturers choosing to move to southern locations like the Philippines.

According to the Japan External Trade Organization, the country was trailing Vietnam as the most preferred area for relocation among Japanese manufacturers in China while others looked at Thailand and Malaysia.

Jetro said the firms were moving about to realign their production network in the region amid an increasing number of free trade and economic partnership agreements being concluded in East Asia.

Such pacts include that between China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Others in the pipeline are those between South Korea and the Asean and bilateral pacts between

Japan and the Philippines as well as Thailand.

Twenty-six percent of respondents in Vietnam cited China as the country from which they transferred production operations.

The survey also found that Japanese firms were mainly moving production bases from one Asean country to another—mostly to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam, in that order.

Jetro said the survey was conducted last January and covered companies operating in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and India.

Questionnaires were sent to 1,865 firms but only 966 or about 52 percent returned valid answers.

The poll showed that majority of respondents were not worried about risks associated with doing business in and with China, considering the revaluation of the Chinese currency and last year's anti-Japan demonstrations in the mainland.

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Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

ROSARIO TOMAS MEDINA

September 27, 1918 – February 21, 2006

Would like to express our profound gratitude for your expression of love, sympathy and support during our time of bereavement.

We find strength in knowing that she touched so many lives in her concern for others. She will continue to live in our hearts through the lives we lead as a testament to her legacy of love.

Into Your hands, I commit my spirit, redeem me O Lord,
The God of Salvation. PSALMS 31:5

Atty. Lumen R. Policarpio

of Navotas, Metro Manila

October 24, 1916 – March 30, 2006

Former Assistant Executive Secretary to Pres. Ramon Magsaysay
Former President of Federacion Internacional De Abogadas (FIDA)
Former President IBP, Manila Chapter
Former Chairman of UNESCO (Philippines)
Former Member, Board of Liquidators, Office of the President
Former President, Woman Lawyers Association of the Philippines (WLAP)
Distinguished Elderly, Cathedral of King, Sheridan St., Mandaluyong City.

Parents: Simeon (†) & Modesta (†); Brothers and Sisters: Ricardo, Felizardo (†), Abelardo (†), Baby (†), Conde, Pepe (†) and Ruben; Adopted Children: Former PLLO Sec. Jimmie & Sheila Policarpio, Renee & Beth Policarpio, Gina Policarpio, Sisters and Brother-in-Law, Nephews & Nieces, and Grandchildren. Relatives and Friends join in prayer for her eternal repose in heaven.

Her remains lie at the Magallanes Church Memorial Chapel, Magallanes Village, South Super Hi-way (SLEX), Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, April 5, 2006 after 9:00 A.M. Mass at the Family Mausoleum at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

GREGORIO QUIROLGICO SERAFICA, SR.

Has joined his wife "Rizalina" and peacefully rest in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord on March 30, 2006 at the age of 93.

His loving children Gregorio Jr., Maria Cristina, Wilfredo, Rogelio, Zenaida, Archimedes & Imelda; Their spouses Cynthia, Florencio, Jose, Steve; His ever loving grandchildren & great grandchildren, relatives and friends request prayers for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla de la Virgen, Santuario De San Antonio Parish, McKinley Rd., Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 2, 2006 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.



DR. CECILIO E. ENCELAN, JR.

UST MEDICINE & SURGERY '73
Ateneo de Manila High School '59

Passed away on the Grace of our Lord on March 30, 2006 at the age of 63

His loving wife Menchie; children Dr. Maribeth & Boy, Dr. Cecille & Endrik, Bobot & Tess, Maricar & Ricky, grandchildren Eicel, Lauren, Joy, Jolo, Izabel, Mika, Dudut, Joanne, Mark, Paolo & Luis, aunts, nephews, nieces, cousins and other relatives and friends request the pious readers to join them in prayers for his eternal happiness in heaven.

His remains lie in state at the St. Peter Memorial Chapels, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at the Himlayang Pilipino on a date to be announced later.

Message of Thanks

His wife Flora, daughter Carmela, son-in-law Nicky; grandchildren Max and Gabbie; sisters & brother Carmen, Romeo, Juliet; nephews and nieces, relatives and friends of the late

DR. ALENDRY PLATA CAVILES, JR.

who joined his Creator on February 21, 2006

wish to convey their heartfelt gratitude to all those who paid their last respects, offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers, messages of sympathy and Novena Masses, donated to L.I.F.E. Foundation and who in various ways gave comfort to the family.

A Holy Mass will be offered on the 40th day of Alen's demise on April 1, 2006, Saturday at 5:00 p.m. at Santuario de San Antonio Parish Center, Forbes Park, Makati City (2nd Floor) – Bays 1 & 2.

FR. ALFEO G. NUDAS, SJ

was called home to the Lord on Friday, 31 March 2006

Wake

Oratory of St. Ignatius at Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila University Campus, Loyola Heights, Q.C. Mass will be celebrated every evening at 8:00 P.M.

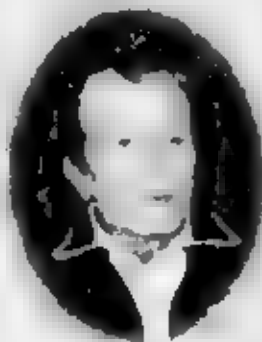
Interment

at 8:30 A.M. on Monday, 3 April in the Oratory of St. Ignatius, Loyola House of Studies.

Sacred Heart Novitiate Cemetery, Novaliches, Q.C. immediately after the Funeral Mass

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF HIS SOUL

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."



"Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake... They shall live forever!"

Dan 12:2a

JOSE "PEPING" C. MACATANGAY

of Batangas City

was called home to his Maker on the 28th of March 2006 at the age of 85.

His loving wife Cesarla (Charing) Soriano Macatangay, his children and their spouses Evelyn and Joey Wambango, Wilana, Evangeline & Dondie Dy, Precioso and Ruby Roxas, Edgardo & Detti Dimaculangan, Limasa (†) & Rory Gutierrez, Samway & Charissa Castillo, Marvin, Marlon, his grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews, relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the San Fernando Funeral Homes, Kuminlang Ibaas, Batangas City

Interment will be on Sunday, April 2, 2006 at the Eternal Gardens Memorial Park after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at the Basilica of Immaculate Conception Church, Batangas City.

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ARCH. ERWIN S. MANLAPAZ

Peacefully joined his Creator on March 30, 2006

His bereaved wife Carmelita Manlapaz; children Ima May & Ayn Wynn, son-in-law Amiel, granddaughter Gabby, request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at Loyola Memorial Chapels, Sucat, Parañaque City.

Interment is on Sunday, 02 April 2006

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Erap endorses joint replacement surgery

By Charles E. Buban

TAKE IT FROM FORMER President Joseph Estrada: there is no need to suffer endlessly from arthritis.

Estrada, according to his orthopedic surgeon Christopher Mow, preferred to take anti-inflammatory medications and put up with the pain in his knees. Estrada, he said, dreaded the idea of undergoing a long surgical procedure and the painful recovery process that could follow.

But when Estrada's gait deteriorated markedly and walking became much more difficult by the day, he finally gave in and decided to follow his doctor's advice. He underwent a joint replacement surgery in Hong Kong in December 2004, and Estrada has been thankful since.

Cracking knees

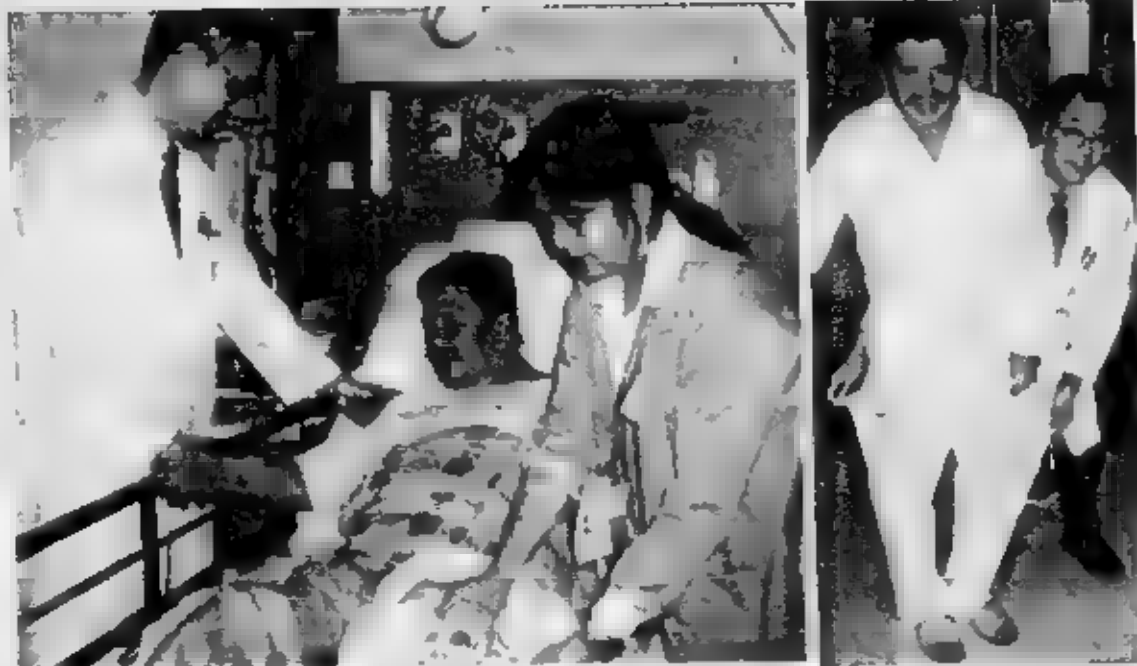
"I'm so glad that I can walk straight again. But what I'm most happy about is I no longer experience spasms of pain around my knee day in and day out. Before, I could actually hear my knees cracking every time I walked. Sometimes I would even wake up in the middle of the night because my knees were hurting so much," Estrada said in response to a questionnaire sent to his Tanay, Rizal rest house where he is detained on charges of plunder and perjury.

The questionnaire was sent through his lawyers.

Erap as spokesperson

After the operation that included correcting the angle of his knees (that made him an inch taller), the grateful Estrada is now considering becoming a spokesperson for total joint replacement surgery to help educate middle-aged and elderly Filipinos who need to undergo the procedure.

"A lot of Filipinos suffer from severe arthritis and my advice is: Don't suffer in silence anymore.



DR. CHRISTOPHER Mow checks on his famous patient, former President Joseph Estrada, after the latter underwent a joint replacement surgery in December 2004. At right, doctor and patient show the effects of the operation.

You have a choice, ask your doctor about joint replacement surgery in order to get back to your regular activities as soon as possible," Estrada said.

Mow, a Stanford University clinical assistant professor, said the benefits and success rate (around 98 percent) of total joint replacement surgery offset the cost of the operation (between \$6,000 and \$10,000).

Mow was interviewed by the Inquirer last month when he visited Estrada to check on his patient's progress.

Prosthesis

In total joint replacement surgery, the ends of a damaged joint (in the knee, hip or shoulder) is removed and replaced with an artificial joint or prosthesis. This procedure is considered if other conservative treatments have been exhausted, such as weight loss, activity modification, physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medication and cortisone injections.

Mow said Estrada's knees had practically no cartilage left on the bone and the edges were already scratchy like

sandpaper.

He said the cartilage was removed and replaced with plastic (polyethylene) surfaces and the bones with metal (cobalt/chromium alloy).

Same quality, skills

For the past 20 years, total joint replacement surgery has been performed throughout the country in private and government-run hospitals.

Mow said the implants used here are of the same component and quality as the ones used abroad.

Mow said the Philippines has world class surgeons who can skillfully perform the procedure.

"Besides, they were mostly trained abroad, particularly in the United States," he said, adding that some of his best students include the country's top surgeons Jose Syquia and Angelo Ochoa.

Mow cited the Philippine General Hospital, Dr. Jose R. Reyes Memorial Medical Center and the Philippine Orthopedic Center as among the leading hospitals in the country offering the procedure.

Possible complications

Although the procedure is relatively safe and the success rate is high, Mow said complications could arise, including infection, development of blood clots and prosthesis malfunction.

"This is why a prospective patient's medical condition is thoroughly reviewed before deciding [whether he is a candidate for] the operation," Mow said.

The patient is also continuously monitored during and immediately after the operation.

Immediate use

The patient is encouraged to use the new joint immediately to prevent the formation of clots that could be potentially dangerous, Mow said. After some time the patient can already do leg strengthening exercises.

The implants are designed to last more than 20 years, but they will eventually wear out, which is why joint replacement surgery is usually recommended for older patients.

Patients, however, cannot anymore perform strenuous activities like running, jumping and athletics as these would wear out the prosthetic joints.

Solution to math trick

THIS TELEPHONE MATH TRICK appeared last March 4.

1. Key in the first three digits of your seven-digit phone number into the calculator.

(Note: Do not key in the area code, but the three digits after.)

2. Multiply by 80.

3. Add 1.

4. Multiply by 250.

5. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number.

6. Add the last 4 digits of your phone number again.

7. Subtract 250.

8. Divide by 2.

What appears on the calculator is your seven-digit phone number. Why does it work?

First solution

Several readers sent solutions. A detailed one comes from Reynaldo Nograles (nograles@yahoo.com) of Southville International School and Colleges.

Let the seven-digit telephone number be given by ABCDEFG.

Under the decimal system, this number can be expanded as:

$$A(10^6) + B(10^5) + C(10^4) + D(10^3) + E(10^2) + F(10) + G$$

Let $x=10$; this means that the number can now be written as:

$$Ax^6 + Bx^5 + Cx^4 + Dx^3 + Ex^2 + Fx + G$$

Now, going through the eight steps of the puzzle:

1) The first three digits of the telephone number expanded in decimal, still with $x=10$, will be $Ax^3 + Bx^2 + Cx$

2) Multiplying this by 8x (which is 80 because $x=10$), we obtain $8Ax^4 + 8Bx^3 + 8Cx^2$

3) Adding 1, we get $8Ax^4 + 8Bx^3 + 8Cx^2 + 1$

4) Multiplying by $2x^2 + 5x$ (this expression is 250 because $x=10$), we obtain $16Ax^6 + (40A + 16B)x^4 + (40B + 16C)x^3 + (40C + 2E)x^2 + 5x$

5 and 6) Add twice the last four digits of the telephone number DEFG.

This number, expanded in the decimal system, and then setting again $x=10$, can be written as $Dx^3 + Ex^2 + Fx + G$ and twice of this is $2Dx^3 + 2Ex^2 + 2Fx + 2G$.

Adding this to the result of step 4, we obtain $16Ax^6 + (40A + 16B)x^4 + (40B + 16C)x^3 + (40C + 2E + 2D)x^2 + (2F + 5)x + 2G$

7) Subtracting $2x^2 + 5x$ (which is 250 because $x=10$), we get $16Ax^6 + (40A + 16B)x^4 + (40B + 16C + 2D)x^3 + (40C + 2E)x^2 + 2Fx + 2G$

8) Dividing by 2, we get $8Ax^6 + (20A + 8B)x^4 + (20B + 8C + D)x^3 + (20C + E)x^2 + Fx + G$

Substituting 10 for x and then combining similar terms, we ob-

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua



tain the final result: $A(1,000,000) + B(100,000) + C(10,000) + D(1,000) + E(100) + F(10) + G$ or $A(10^6) + B(10^5) + C(10^4) + D(10^3) + E(10^2) + F(10) + G$ which is the decimal expansion of the digit number ABCDEFG, the telephone number.

Simple solution

Ivan Quentin (trylemor@yahoo.com) explains briefly:

Let the phone number be xxxyyy where xxx are the first three digits (not necessarily all the same) and yyy the last four digits (not necessarily all the same). Then Steps 1 to 7 when combined produce the following expression (where * indicates multiplication: $[250 * (80 * xxx + 1) + yyy + yyy - 250] / 2$.

Simplifying, we get $(20,000 * xxx + 250 + 2 * yyy - 250) / 2$, which equals $10,000 * xxx + yyy$. But this is just xxx0000 + yyy = xxxyyy, which is the original phone number.

Other solutions

Katherine Marie Tanyu (km.tanyu@yahoo.com), a BS Industrial Engineering major at UP Diliman, uses a slightly more complex method involving modulus or remainders of numbers.

Other readers with correct solutions are Ferdinand Abue, Edgar Amado, Alfredo Angeles, Gerardo Angan, Virgilio Cabrera, Kevin Cathagan, Dade Duarte, Rey Jose Edmilao, Emmanuel Jarilla, Den Mark Malabuyoc, Maria Jose, Reynaldo Parayno, Ging Pulaon, Enrique Provencio, Daisy Samonte, Ralph Villa, and Rbdoblyn. Congratulations!

Taking a break

Why do puzzles? Christine Battung (christine.battung@up.edu.ph), a BS Metallurgical Engineering major at UP Diliman, writes:

"I spent my whole week attending forums and class discussions about the national situation in the university. After a week of uncertainties, I finally decided to take a break from all the political chaos for a while. That was when I read your column and found just the right thing to take my mind from the world of politics: a math problem. God bless!"

Omega-3 bacon?

OMEGA-3 FATTY ACIDS HELP decrease the risk of heart disease. They help regulate the central nervous system and have been implicated in treating depression, schizophrenia, and bipolar disorder.

Unfortunately, omega-3 fatty acids aren't produced by the body and have to be obtained by eating foods rich in them. Oily fish such as albacore tuna, salmon, mackerel and sardines are good sources, but high mercury levels and the inability to get the fish fresh stand in the way of including these foods in a regular diet. This is one reason omega 3 is perhaps more commonly associated with fish oil pill.

Transgenic pigs

Recent experiments would indicate though that there may come a time when people could order some pork chops or bacon and still keep their omega-3 levels high.

Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine teamed up with colleagues from the University of Missouri-Columbia and Massachusetts General Hospital to create transgenic pigs that produce high levels of omega-3.

Results of the study were published online in Nature Biotechnology on March 26.

The work was led by Dr. Yifan Dai. His lab transferred a gene called fat-1 into porcine fibroblasts. The lab in the National Swine Resource and Research Center at the University of Missouri cloned the pigs from the

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

fibroblasts via nuclear transfer cloning. This process allows clones to be made by replacing the nuclei inside donor eggs with the nuclei containing the genetic material to be cloned, in this case, the fat-1 gene. The eggs are then placed inside the surrogate mother's uterus and allowed to develop normally.

Over 1,500 embryos were transferred into several surrogates, and only 12 pregnancies resulted. Of these, only five went to term, producing 10 live births and two stillborn male piglets.

Results

There were no obvious differences between the piglets, and DNA samples from each of the live piglets—six of which were found to have the fat-1 transgene—were then sent to the labs at Massachusetts General Hospital and University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine to check their omega-3 levels.

The results showed that the wild-type pigs had higher omega-6 levels than they did omega-3 levels, which is normal. The six transgenic pigs had higher levels of the heart-healthy omega-3 than they did the omega-6 fatty acids, and four of the piglets had higher omega-3 levels than the others.

Re-balancing diet

"Livestock with a health ratio of omega-3 to omega-6 fatty acids may be a promising way to re-balance the modern diet without relying solely on diminishing fish supplies or supplements," said Dr. Jing X. Kang, associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and one of the paper's co-authors.

It was Dr. Kang's research that paved the way for this paper. Two years ago, his lab created the first transgenic mammals—mice—with high omega-3 levels.

"These animals could represent an alternative source as well as be an ideal model for studying cardiovascular disease and autoimmune disorders," Dr. Dai said.

Heart defect

Three of the piglets were later diagnosed with a heart defect associated with the cloning process, which is reassuring given the researchers' suggestions that the animals could eventually go in the market, although much red tape and consumer marketing stand in the way of this possibility.

The research notes that transgenic pork will not have any discolorations or textural differences, which is the most they can say until someone can check for flavor.

The heart-healthy bacon may not be in the market tomorrow, but maybe the research can lead to an alternative to fish oil pills in the meantime.

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

I WAS ASKED DURING A RECENT lecture if chelation therapy, which many patients with coronary artery disease (CAD) subject themselves to, has proven cardiovascular benefits.

Chelation is a form of treatment in which a drug is administered either intravenously or by mouth to bind molecules,

such as metals or minerals, and hold them tightly so that they

can be removed from the body. It has been scientifically proven to be effective for toxic metal poisoning.

Lead poisoning can cause irreversible damage on the brain and nervous system.

EDTA (ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid) chelation therapy is a popular form being administered by some physicians in the country. The solution consists of a synthetic amino acid that is delivered through the veins and it's supposed to reduce the clogging of obstructed arteries in the heart. It is not approved for this indication by the US Food and Drug Administration or by our Bureau of Food and Drugs.

Experts' advice

Various heart specialist associations, including the Philippine Heart Association, have issued advisories stating that there is a lack of adequate scientific research to verify the safety and effectiveness of EDTA chelation therapy for CAD.

Currently, the only available data consists of case reports and



case series. Some patients who have undergone chelation therapy and the physicians who prescribed it claimed subjective improvement in CAD.

There are also published clinical trials but they only involve small numbers of people which were not sufficient to show statistically significant results.

To settle the issue whether chelation therapy produces benefits and is safe for CAD, the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in the United States is currently doing a large-scale, well-designed clinical trial. The study aims to recruit 2,372 participants aged 50 years and above with a prior myocardial infarction (heart attack). It evaluates EDTA chelation therapy and/or high-dose vitamin therapy in the treatment of CAD.

Costing approximately \$30 million, this study is over 20 times larger than any previous study on chelation therapy. It is designed to be large enough to detect if there are any mild or moderate benefits or risks associated with the therapy.

Vitamins, minerals

EDTA chelation therapy, as practiced by several doctors locally, often includes administra-

tion of high doses of antioxidant vitamin and mineral supplements. Thus, one can always argue that the effects of the therapy could be connected to these supplements. To address this issue, the investigators will randomly assign participants to receive either EDTA chelation or placebo. Then the patients in these two groups will receive either low-dose or high-dose vitamin/mineral supplements.

Hopefully, this study can finally answer the question if EDTA chelation and/or high-dose vitamin supplements can improve event-free survival (length of time without another heart attack, stroke, death, etc.), are safe for use, improve quality of life, and are cost effective.

I heard that it costs a big bundle to undergo the entire course consisting of about 30 sessions.

The principal investigator for the trial is Gervasio A. Lamas, MD, director of cardiovascular research and academic affairs at Mount Sinai Medical Center Miami Heart Institute.

The investigators enrolled the first participants in September 2003. The study will take approximately five years to complete.

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Big quacky Easter at Taal Vista Hotel

EXPERIENCE A "BIG Quacky Easter" at the breathtaking Taal Vista Hotel. The hotel is coming up with fun and exciting activities including the hunt for the biggest Easter egg. The Big Quacky Easter activity on April 16 is open to billeted and walk-in guests at P350++ per ticket and already includes a kiddie lunch buffet, kiddie games, cartoon/film showing and other fun kiddie activities with Easter mascots.

Bear the heat at the hotel's Lobby Lounge with our Summer Coolers like the Taal Mudslide & Goin' Bananas. Savor the Taal Vista Special Lechon de Leche and delight your sweet tooth with the dessert of the month, Cathedral Window. All Saturdays of April at the cafe on the ridge offers Spices of Southeast Asia Lunch Buffet. Discover the 13 Regional Cuisines of the Philippines' Lunch Buffet every Sunday. Guests can rejuvenate by availing of the spa

services at the Yang Yang Spa or take a dip at the refreshing free-form pool. Lounge at the cool and elegant interiors of the hotel and enjoy a Merienda Buffet (all Sundays of April) and listen to acoustic renditions every Saturday night.

Taal Vista Hotel is managed by Fuego Hotels & Properties. For inquiries and reservations call (02) 886-4325 / (02) 751-3088 to 89 or log on to www.taalvistahotel.com or www.fuegohotels.com

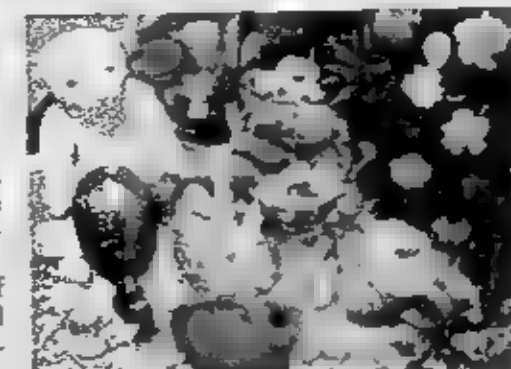


An Easter extravaganza at Mandarin

MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MANILA GEARS UP for an exhilarating Easter Sunday egg hunt and celebration dubbed "Toys 'N Treats-An Easter Extravaganza," on April 16. Children of all ages will be treated to a fun and exciting, theme-inspired event in the ballroom, which is transformed into a Toyland that will see the most festive activities ever to be assembled in one place.

Held in partnership with Toytown, Jam of Rustan's, M&M's, Enchanted Kingdom, and Events by Gigi Bautista, the Easter extravaganza promises overnight accommodations for two with breakfast at Mandarin Oriental, Manila and a host of other exciting gifts and prizes for the egg hunt winners. Separate egg hunts will be held for children up to 5 years old, and for those 6 years old and above.

The celebration starts with a colorful Easter parade of Enchanted Kingdom mas-



costs. Other fun-filled activities that can be enjoyed at Mandarin Oriental's Easter fairgrounds include egg-painting contest, face-painting session, Nickelodeon art contest, kiddie fashion show by Jam of Rustan's, a B-daman tournament, an Enchanted Kingdom magic show and concert, Bratz glitter tattoo

Renaissance Makati's Easter treat

RENAISSANCE MAKATI CITY HOTEL, Manila (formerly New World Renaissance Hotel) offers you a chance to win a four-day three-nights holiday for two at Hong Kong Disneyland to those who would avail of its Easter Room package from April 12 to 16. Stay at a Deluxe Room for only P3,350+++ (room only) and P3,850+++ (includes buffet breakfast). A maximum of two adults and two children below 12 years old may stay in a room. One raffle coupon is given per night checked-in. The longer the stay, the more chances to win the Hong Kong holiday. Also, two invitations will be given for the exciting Easter Sunday Egg Hunt on April 16, from 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom. Late check-out at 3 p.m. will be extended to those who avail of the special room package. The Easter Room Package is for local residents and foreign nationals with a valid Alien Certificate of Registration only.

An Easter Sunday celebration awaits families in the restaurants as it offers sumptuous international and Asian fare at the Coffee Shop at P1,288+++. At Emperor Court, the hotel's premiere Chinese restaurant, savor its authentic fine Cantonese cuisine in a special la carte menu. At the Lobby Lounge, enjoy the yummy Chocolate "Wishing" Fountain at P350+++ per person. Patrons who partake of lunch on Easter Sunday at any of the hotel's food outlets with a minimum of P3,000 get two invitations to the Easter Egg Hunt and a chance to win gift certificates in a raffle.

For more information and reservations, call the Renaissance Makati City Hotel, Manila at 811-6888.

Dusit Hotel offers room package for Easter

EXPERIENCE A RESTFUL SUMMER day at Dusit Hotel Nikko and stay in the Hotel's luxurious guest-rooms with your loved ones this Easter. You may choose from the specially designed "Easter Room Package."

The "Easter Room Package" gives homage to families this summer to enjoy the many facets of the season. This limited offer, valid from April 10 to 16, starts at P 4,200++ for a Deluxe Room with buffet breakfast at The Café for two persons and P5,200++ for a Deluxe Room with a sumptuous buffet lunch at The Café for two persons ("Easter Brunch Buffet" coupon will be issued for April 16).

Depending on your choice of accommodations, availing of the room package includes complimentary access coupons for kids 12 years and below to the Hotel's "Easter Family Fair" on April 16.

Celebrate Easter at the Grand Ballroom of Dusit Hotel Nikko on April 16 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and experience excitement and magic for the whole family with its "Easter Family Fair." Join Dusit Hotel Nikko as it takes you to the whimsical world of carnival. The event creates a venue for families to bond with the exciting activity booths where you can play and win fabulous prizes. Not to be missed is the "a-MAZE-ing Egg



Hunt" wherein kids will hunt for Easter eggs in a maze.

The "Easter Room Package" is valid for local residents and ex-

triate with ACR.

For inquiries and reservations, please call 867-3333 extensions 3131 to 3134.

Try healthy dining for grad celebration

JAYM'S GRILL OFFERS A WIDE variety of soups, vegetables, seafood, chicken, pork and beef courses. Those who want to eat healthy can choose from several grilled dishes which use only the freshest seafoods, harvested from pristine waters, flown in and baked or grilled.

Prices are very reasonable too. Seafood dishes cost P150-P300, while combos for two to three people are below P400.

With its big servings, airy

ambience and reasonable prices, Jaym's Grill is a sure-shot dining experience for any group—big or small—especially this graduation season, when families and friends reunite to celebrate the success of the graduates.

Jaym's Grill is located at Bonifacio Global City Taguig and Watermark in Pasong Tamo. For reservations and inquiries, call 887-2709 or 887-2741.



WATERFRONT HOTELS AND CASINOS APPRECIATION NIGHT

Waterfront Hotels and Casinos recently held its "Appreciation Night" at The Loft at Rockwell Center in Makati City on March 10. Corporate director of sales and marketing Joey Bernardino (third from left) is shown with (from left) sales manager Angie Vicencio, sales account manager Danielle Zayco, Cindy Brual, Mae Reyes, jemmah Adeniza, assistant sales manager Joseph Tarn and group marketing communications officer Jemel Gonzaga.

PROPERTY

Landco starts dev't of Ponderosa Heights

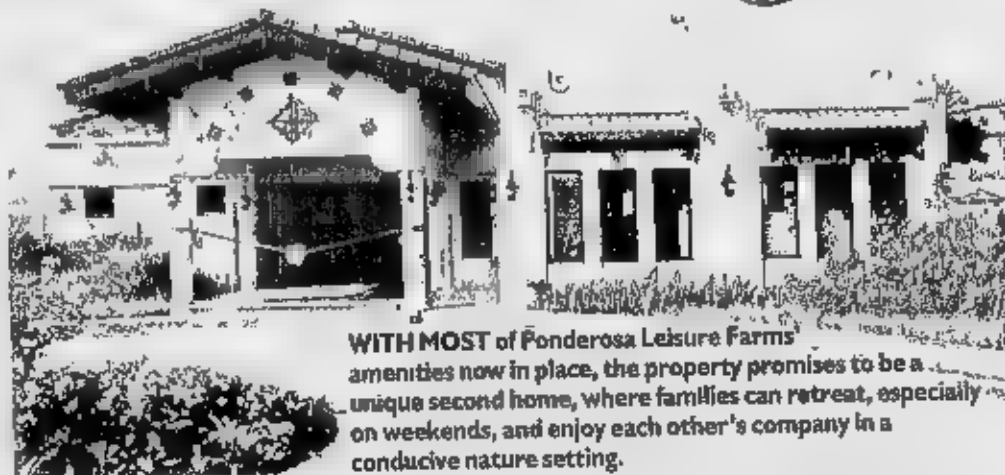
By Charles E. Buban

WITH PHASE ONE of the Ponderosa Leisure Farms nearly sold out, developer Landco Pacific Corp. is now focusing on its latest expansion, the 17-hectare Ponderosa Heights.

Ponderosa Heights is in an elevated position providing its future residents extensive views of the surroundings.

"The area will feature four elegant and ornate garden courts, in which one can enjoy the relaxing space, the breeze and the exhilarating view," shared Alfred Xerez-Burgos III, president and COO of Landco Leisure Development Inc., developer of Ponderosa Heights.

With an exquisite Spanish-Mexican-inspired visual theme, the property located in Silang, Cavite, promises to offer superb location (from Sta. Rosa highway, the place is just a 45-minute drive LANDCO/B2-2



WITH MOST of Ponderosa Leisure Farms amenities now in place, the property promises to be a unique second home, where families can retreat, especially on weekends, and enjoy each other's company in a conducive nature setting.

WITH SPACIOUS multipurpose hall now ready, Casa Ponderosa now hosts a variety of events for its future residents as well as guests.

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SISTER Janelle has her heart set on her home in Puso ng Karmelo.

Puso ng Karmelo

ATOP ONE OF THE ROLLING HILLS OF Damortis, La Union lies a community of peace and tranquility, a very small community of nuns—Mother Mary Claire, Sister Janelle and Sister Cora. Their home is a pleasant stop for me on my occasional travels north. It is a place that refreshes the tired body and quenches the thirsty soul. This haven is known as Puso ng Karmelo.

I first walked up this hill 17 years ago. I remember that day exactly since I had in my arms my eldest daughter, Glee, who was then only 21 days old. It was a grateful trek up the mountain, a veritable prayer of thanksgiving for my beautiful baby girl. That was how it all began, that "homing" instinct I experience every time I'm in the area.

It is an unconscious call for me to climb the mountain and set my prayers to the wind, be they of thanks or supplication. Back then, I had been awed by the exhilarating view of the China Sea as it merged into the San Fabian Bay. A carpet of grass and wildflowers stretched down slopes and meadows before me. Birds called from treetops and crickets chirped from bushes. It was ever so soothing. Today, it remains the same.

Clear vision

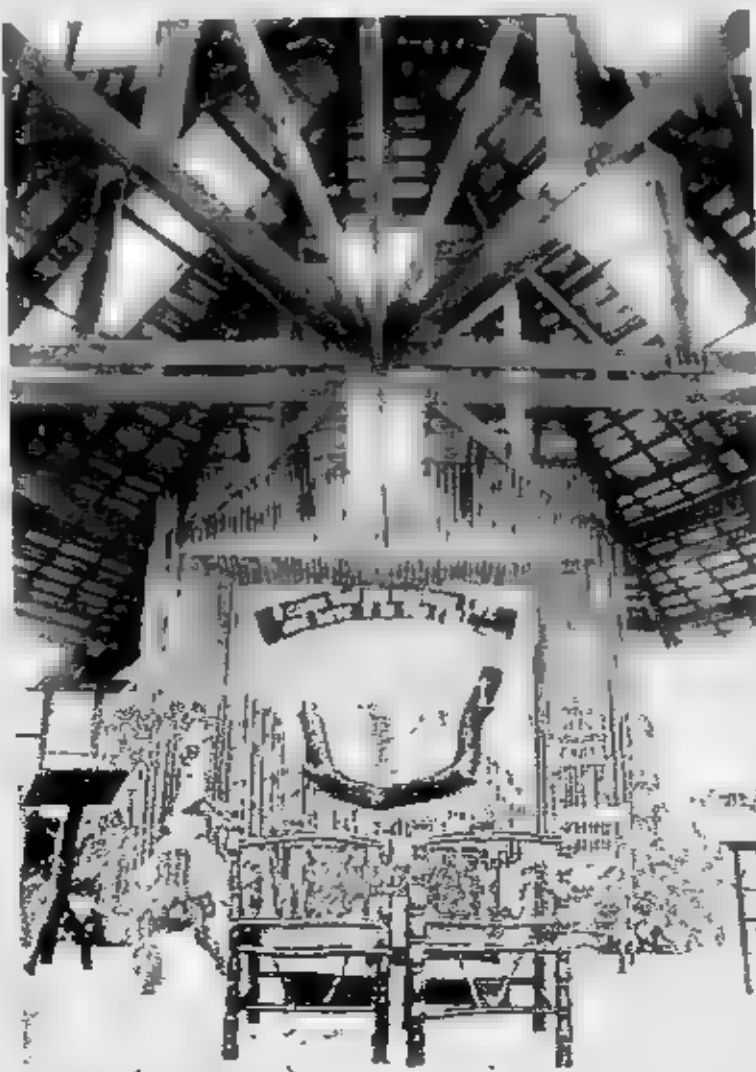
Even back then, these Carmelite sisters already had a clear vision of what this place on the hills could inspire in anyone who scaled its heights. They knew it was the Lord's will for them to develop it and enable other people to feel God's grandeur there. They decided to capitalize on the abundance of God's natural gifts and worked from there.

Through the years, they built little chapels and retreat casitas, oriented toward the grand view of the ocean, the mountainside, or the gardens. They maximized the potentials of the breezes not only for ventilation and comfort,

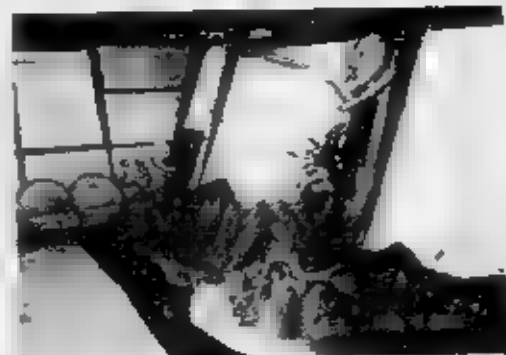
LIVING ARCHITECTURE



Marcos de Guzman Jr.



THE STRUCTURES capitalize on creative use of indigenous materials.



THE SITE is gifted with picturesque views as well as generous lighting and ventilation

but to drive windmills to power their water pumps. They harnessed the sun for natural lighting during the day and to collect enough solar power for emergency night lights and charging mobile phones, not to mention the growing of wonderful flowers in their gardens.

Multistar retreat site

The creativity of their structures is amazing, with special kudos to Sister Janelle, who acts as

the in-house planner, designer, interior decorator, landscape designer, and builder all rolled into one. She makes use only of available indigenous materials and, more important, limited funds to come up with quaint and cozy cottages.

Furnishings are simple but comfortable, generally made from wood, bamboo and cane. Swings, hammocks and mats are a staple in every hut. Oil lamps and candles are the only illumination at night, besides the silver of moonlight and the sparkle of fireflies. Wood carvings and Bible verses are welcome outposts along the paths.

Perhaps, the jaded urbanite will see merely a melange of wooden cabins or expect perfectly manicured lawns and thus, be disappointed. This is not a five- or three-star resort that promises to satisfy cosmopolitan tastes. Instead, it is a multistar retreat site that vows to bring you back to nature and lets you see the grace of God in the simplest detail. There is no piped-in music, other than from breezes and cicadas, to better hear the whisper of your soul, the murmur of your heart, here at Puso ng Karmelo.



A NEW master plan will transform the emerging business district along C-5 into a city that never sleeps.

Bonifacio Global City to unveil new master plan

BONIFACIO GLOBAL CITY will soon unveil a new master plan that will transform the emerging business district along C-5 into a city that never sleeps.

One could call the master plan a reaction to traffic and long commutes to work, to commercial centers, and to recreational and entertainment venues, according to Joel Luna, Ayala Land assistant vice president in charge of technical planning.

Multidisciplinary team

Luna reveals that a multidisciplinary team comprised of Ayala Land experts in planning, office development, commercial centers and property management sat down to map out development in the area together with officers from the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. and Ayala Land's partners in FBDC, Unilab and the Bases Conversion Development Authority.

The team also benefited from the inputs of the best consul-

ants in the fields of urban design, landscaping, transportation, utilities and infrastructure.

Vision

According to Luna, the vision for the new Bonifacio Global City is to allow those who live and work there a balance of activities. While Bonifacio Global City is at the heart of all activities, it is still connected to other central business districts and in relation to the larger region.

Through transport and communication links and even through other transport modes, Bonifacio Global City will be connected to Makati, Ortigas and other central business districts, even in cities in Asia and the Pacific, Luna says.

"Every master plan is unique. This one is tailor-fit to benefit the Philippines. It was carved out of the wealth of experience of its planners. It should allow Bonifacio Global City to join the ranks of other thriving cities in Southeast Asia," he adds.



MEXICAN-SPANISH architecture dominates the Silang, Cavite leisure farm property.

Landco starts ...

From page B2-1

to Makati City) and cool year round weather (thanks to its proximity to Tagaytay City).

Mexican-Spanish style houses

Since the new phase of development is still part of the Ponderosa Leisure Farms, Xeres-Burgos said Ponderosa Heights will also feature flower gardens as well as Mexican-Spanish-style houses that highlight design elements such as warm, earth colors, arched doorways, sliding doors, niches and trellis.

Each house will be designed to convey resort and farm feel with big picturesque windows overlooking scenic views and rooms opening to a central courtyard promoting passive cooling within the structure.

Quaint gardens of roses, bougainvillea, bromeliads and ferns will also be common throughout the property.

"Each week these gardens will feature different blooms. Any week is a perfect time to view these myriad colors," said Xeres-Burgos.

Future residents of Ponderosa Heights will also be able to enjoy the amenities of Ponderosa Leisure Farms including Villa Ponderosa Clubhouse, El Refugio Meditation Garden, Campo Verde Campsite, the Las Rosas outdoor dining restaurant, and the Plaza Maravilla with its flower produce market as well as food and retail stores.

Ponderosa Heights will also enjoy round-the-clock security as well as maintenance and care services for hassle-free gardening.

Apart from leisure farms, Landco Pacific Corp., a multi-product developer, is also engaged in high-quality first-homes subdivisions, residential resorts, shopping centers and central business districts as well as memorial parks.



VILLA PONDEROSA clubhouse and swimming pool

Lifestyle communities created by
LANDCO PACIFIC CORPORATION



PROPERTY

Cyber corporations still need good location

GREENFIELD DEVELOPMENT Corp.'s Edsa's Central IT Center is using its good location to beat its competitors in the crowded real estate market for call centers and other business process outsourcing (BPO) providers.

Jericho R. Go, Greenfield Development vice president for business development, said high-technology companies, however, have old world needs, particularly quick access to transportation which was vital for a labor-intensive business like IT.

"We can compete evenly on price and other specifications but nobody can beat us in terms of location because we are one of the

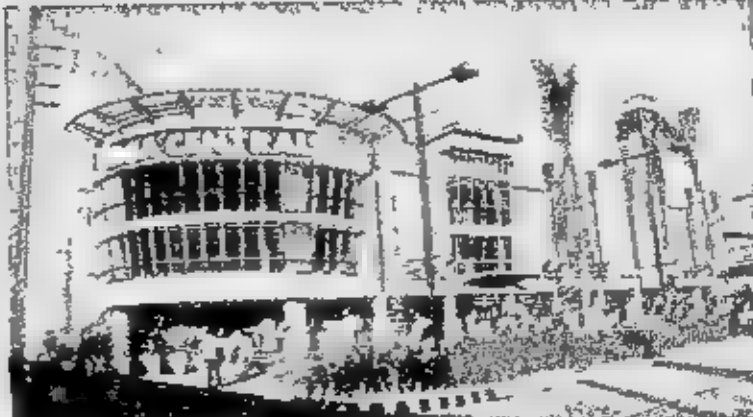
few projects that have virtually 24-hour service for buses, jeepneys and tricycles," said Go. "Not all of them (call center workers) drive cars or have chauffeurs."

More practical bet

Go said Edsa Central's location outside the central business districts make it a more practical bet for call centers and other BPO providers wanting to stay in the country for the long haul.

"People forget how important location is in a service business especially in times when there is a glut in office space and low-price renters like call centers dictate the market. But when office rent starts going up, call centers are forced to move out of Makati and Ortigas and seek areas with more affordable rent," Go said.

He noted that call centers initially converged in Makati and Ortigas because of the real estate slump where landlords were desperate to fill up their newly finished buildings and the old building left by tenants. "It was an unnatural situation. The tenants were forced to make do with their sites not prepped for high-tech



EDSA Central, Greenfield District is now accredited as an IT zone.

firms. This made their start-up costs higher and their operations inefficient," Go said.

24-hour transport service

Go said this trend was happening now in Makati and Ortigas with landlords increasing the rent as demand for office space swells. "Call center operators and other BPO providers are realizing the benefits of going into areas that have a natural 24-hour transport service and structures that address the space and security needs

of high-tech firms," Go said.

He said most IT firms, both existing and incoming players, preferred structures that were built specifically for their needs rather than old structures that were retrofitted to accommodate their needs for high-tech cables, wider floor space and faster elevators.

"We have the advantage over other developments that used old legacy system or old phone cables. It's like we're operating on a Pentium M technology while they're still in a Pentium 1

system," Go said.

He said the 8,000-square-meter floor space allocated for Greenfield's IT Center 1 pavilion have been fully booked just a few months after opening. Greenfield expected the IT Center 2 (which converted an old Unwade Warehouse Club branch into a low-rise, high-tech facility) to be fully booked by the time it opened in June this year.

"Our challenge now is to step up the construction of more facilities because office space for IT companies is becoming scarce. Demand is so far ahead supply right now," Go said. Greenfield is now finalizing the design for its 12-story IT Park building which is being targeted for opening by early 2008.

Greenfield's rush to build IT facilities is in line with its ongoing redevelopment of the 20-hectare Edsa Central facility where up to two hectares have been earmarked for building IT facilities that would mesh with its other retail and residential projects.

Edsa Central IT Center 2 renovated and added one floor to the former Unwade facility.



Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL MARITIME POLYTECHNIC
Cabalawan, Tacloban City Leyte
Tel. No. (053) 321-3356/3352

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID PROCUREMENT OF SECURITY SERVICES

The National Maritime Polytechnic, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project: Procurement of Security Services
Twenty (20) Security Guards rendering 8 hours at
Php 8,656.41 / security guard/month duty daily

Location: NMP Training Complex, Cabalawan, Tacloban City

Approved Budget for the Contract: Php 2,483,045.60

Contract Duration: One Year

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The eligibility check/screening as well as Preliminary Examination of Bids shall, use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 8184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	April 3 - 7, 2006
2. Pre-bid Conference	April 10, 2006; 2:00 p.m. @ NMP Conference Room
3. Submission of Application for Eligibility & Bid Proposal	April 10 - 21, 2006
4. Opening of Bids	April 21, 2006; 9:00 a.m. @ NMP Conference Room
5. Bid Evaluation	April 21 - May 8, 2006
6. Post-qualification	May 8 - 12, 2006
7. Notice of Award	May 15, 2006

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 to the NMP Cashier.

The NMP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ROSITA C. BERINGUEL
BAC Chairman

(PMI-March 25 & April 1, 2006)

PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE INVITATION TO SUBMIT OFFERS

The asset being offered on an "as-is, where-is" basis is a parcel of land with an area of 15,319 sq m., formerly owned by MARSTEEL CORPORATION (MC) located at Brgy. Baesa, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

The above asset is being offered at an indicative Price of PESOS: SEVENTY SEVEN MILLION THREE HUNDRED SIXTY THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED FIFTY (P77,360,950).

Offers will be received, opened and tabulated in the presence of the offerors on April 26, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at the PMO Conference Room, 6th Floor, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

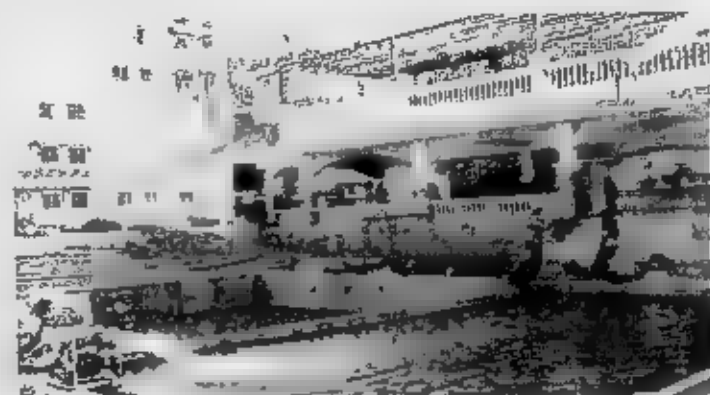
Interested parties may secure the sale documents for a non-refundable fee of P1,500.00 from the PMO Marketing Office.

If the Offer for Sale becomes a failure PMO reserves the right to negotiate immediately with the Offerors or any third party for the purchase of the Asset.

Interested parties are advised to deal directly with PMO.

For more information, please call Ms. Jane V. Santiago at telephone numbers 818-4733, 892-2145

(PMI-March 30, 31 & April 1, 2006)



CONSTRUCTION OF AMENITIES AREA

DMCI Homes, the real estate business unit of construction giant D.M. Consunji Inc., has started constructing the amenities area for its residential development Bonifacio Heights. Located inside Fort Bonifacio, Bonifacio Heights is a premier condominium development built exclusively for the Armed Forces of the Philippines personnel. The project offers medium-rise condominium buildings with top-class amenities such as grand clubhouse, basketball court, fitness gym, swimming pool and pocket parks. The amenities area is expected for completion in April.

Creba clears Lakeshore project of 'charges'

THE CHAMBER OF REAL ESTATE AND BUILDERS ASSOCIATION (Creba) has cleared the Lakeshore project in Mexico, Pampanga and its developer, architect Nestor Mangio, of charges of having allegedly violated requirements of the government housing agencies, as published in the Inquirer on Feb. 25.

This was reported by Creba national president Pedro C. Tario, who said the organization's ethics committee was satisfied by the documentary evidence presented by the project owner and developer.

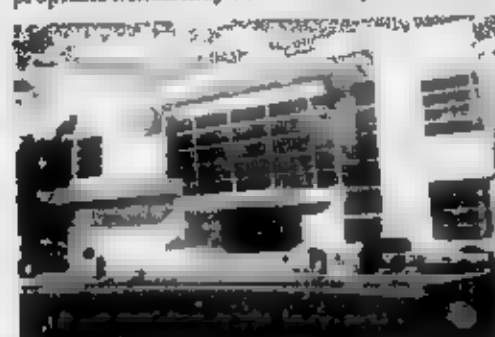
The evidence consisted of registration, license to sell and certificate of completion issued by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, covering the Lakeshore Subdivision in the North Luzon Expressway. Other documents were Environmental Management Bureau compliance certificate issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and development permit by the local government of Mexico.

Mangio, in a statement, also denied having been charged of any violation by the HLURB, Department of Agrarian Reform.

Tario said that Creba records show that Mangio is not only a member of good standing, but also a member of the board of directors and an active member of the Creba lobby committee charged with the responsibility of articulating and advancing Creba's advocacies to enhance the housing industry's role in the economy.

As the umbrella organization of direct and indirect players in the real estate and construction industry, Tario said, Creba has actively been policing its own ranks over the years.

Thus, he said, anyone with a gripe against any Creba member is urged to file a written complaint with the ethics committee so that appropriate action may be taken early.



LATEST PROJECT

Castillo and Associates Designs and Consultancy recently unveiled its latest project, the 1,898 sq-m EZP Center Phase 1 located inside the Calamba Premiere Industrial Park in Laguna. The warehouse facility is built to accommodate business solutions for domestic and foreign investors.



Escape

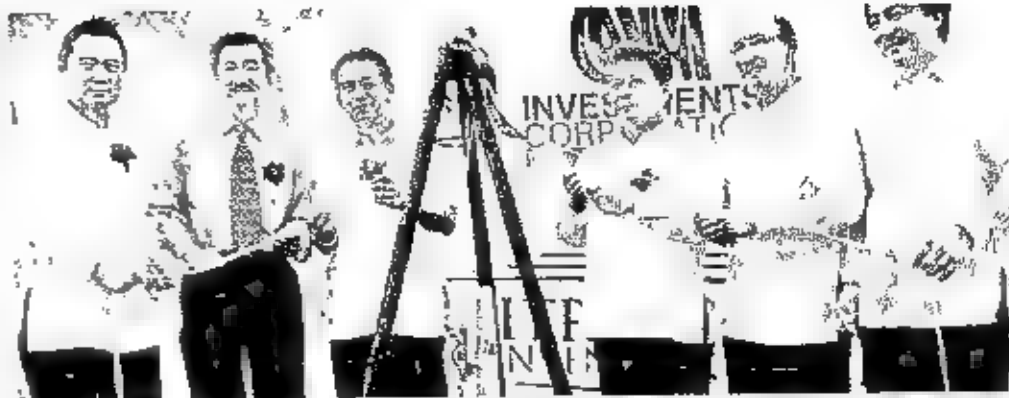
PROPERTY

SM Investments starts construction of expo and convention center

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. STARTS CONSTRUCTION of a convention and exhibition center at the SM Central Business Park. Two weeks ago it broke ground on a 10-story e-commerce building.

The two projects, together with the Mall of Asia, the Philippines' biggest shopping mall, are aimed at positioning the SM Central Business Park as the country's new premiere business district. The 60-hectare SM Central Business Park is located near the international airport and key seaports.

SMIC vice chair Henry T. Sy Jr. and first executive vice president Hans T. Sy led the groundbreaking on March 23 by unveiling the project model and the architect's perspective. Philippine Reclamation Authority general manager Silvestro Bello III, Tourism Department NCR director Reynato Chua, and Pasay City councilor Dr. Jose Antonio Roxas attended the event.

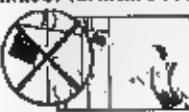


SHOWN during the time capsule laying for the Mastrade Expo and Convention Center are, from left, SM Investments Corp. vice chair Henry T. Sy Jr. and first EVP Hans T. Sy; Tourism Department NCR director Reynato Chua, representing Tourism Secretary Ace Durano; Philippine Reclamation Authority CEO and GM Silvestro H. Bello III; former Public Works Undersecretary Mabini E. Pablo and Pasay City councilor Dr. Jose Antonio Roxas, representing Mayor Wenceslao B. Trinidad.

ATTENTION

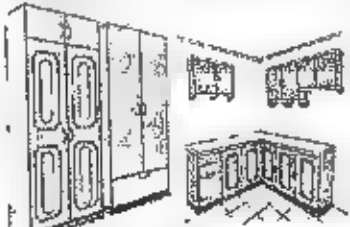
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metropolitan

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Largest privately run center

Mastrade Expo and Convention Center, which is expected to cost P900 million, is scheduled for completion in June 2007. International firm Arquitectonica is the project's design consultant while the architect of record is Jose Siao Ling and Associates.

Mastrade will become the country's largest privately-run exhibition and convention center. The 46,647-square-meter building will have three floors and basement parking with a total leasable area of 19,800 sq m featuring large exhibition areas and function rooms.

"Mastrade is envisioned to become a preferred venue for major conferences and trade exhibits as it will offer more modern facilities and larger floor areas for international and local exhibitions, conferences, events and functions," said SMIC executive vice president Jess Lucas. "It incorporates a contemporary look and world-class design that raises the level of prestige and exposure of trade exhibitors."

Maximum use of space

The building's design allows for maximum use of space, giving exhibitors flexibility and options in terms of their specific area requirements. The exhibition area at the ground level will have a floor area of 9,000 sq m, which can be divided into four halls.

Commercial shops will be located along the perimeter. A bridge way on the second level will connect Mastrade to the Mall of Asia, the SM group's biggest shopping mall. The third level will have a total floor area of 8,730 sq m, which can be divided into six halls for functions and conventions, along with nine meeting rooms.

This early, organizers of both local and international events have already signified their interest in using Mastrade as their venue, according to Dexter Deyto, assistant vice president for Shopping Center Management Corp., the operator of Mastrade. He said, "We plan to undertake an international marketing campaign and tap the market for medical conventions," Deyto said.

Handyman holds builders' fair

HANDYMAN'S SECOND BUILDERS' FAIR, held recently at Robinsons Starmlis Pampanga, was packed with product exhibits, free workshops, games and big discounts on a wide range of merchandise. It brought together different sectors of the building industry, hardware fanatics and just about anyone interested in home improvement.

Gracing the opening ceremony were Rufino Ng, general manager of APT Homes, Norman Dy, president of NKD International, Anthony Allarey, country manager of Black and Decker, Bob Plank, Do it Best USA consultant, Nilo Mapa, general manager of Robinsons Malls and Mitz Vicente, GM of Robinsons Starmlis Pampanga. Handyman was represented by its president, Willy Co; GM Johnson Go; AVP-merchandising Stanley Co; operations manager Ryan Sison and marketing services manager Marivi Flores.

High-quality products

Thirty booths displayed and sold at the best prices high-quality products including industrial and power tools, assorted paints and painting materials, kitchen and bathroom showcases, auto parts and accessories, security gadgets, lawn and garden products, plumbing and heating devices, household and pet accessories, water heaters, water tanks, tiles, pipes and fittings, and summer ware such as camping tents.

The customers were also treated to free workshops and demonstrations which were very educational and informative including "When Where and How to Use Car Care", Nissan's Road Safety and Defensive Driving, Jardine-Solignum, Durban, Thoroson and Waterplug's "Home Maintenance Must-Haves", Bosch's "Uses and Practical Applications of Power Tools" and Commander Auto's "Get to Know Your Car's Engine". These activities showcased useful tips for do-it-yourself aficionados.

Under one roof

"Our aim was to offer innovative products under one roof, help consumers find what they need, and ensure maximum service through attentive customer care," said Marivi Flores, Handyman AVP for merchandising.

"We were inspired by the success of our 1st Builders' Fair held last year at Handyman Robinsons Place Pioneer," added Marivi Flores, marketing services manager.

Handyman currently has 16 branches in Metro Manila, 22 in Luzon and nine in the Visayas-Mindanao regions.

SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2006

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

1



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fool Proof

Lovely moments
with **Iza Calzado**
and **Karylle**

Super scenes at the
**Singapore
Fashion Festival**
page 31

Dance & Hoppin'
with DJs
Riddler
and **Emian**

Christian Lacroix's
French Spring
at the Ayala Museum
page C4

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Mobile Homeless

IS IT POSSIBLE TO LOSE YOUR life for a couple of days and resurrect after the weekend? That's presuming you're not Jesus of course.

When practically your whole life is stored in that compact little device that nobody can leave home without anymore, then losing it is akin to being dead for a few days.

It happened last Friday night. My friend and I had happily filled our systems with rum cokes to reward ourselves for clawing through another work week, and to welcome a new summer of possibilities. Little did we know that as we were clinking our chilled glasses to our favorite season, some lowlife bastard scum had stuck his grungy hands into our bags and stolen our cell phones.

If I may break down my mental anguish into stages upon this terrible discovery, it was something like this:

The Sweat Storm

"No way. This thing only happens to other people." Such thoughts swirled in my head as I was sweating profusely, desperately searching every pocket, fold, crinkle and crease inside my bag, hoping against all odds that my cell phone was just buried under a sheaf of year-old gasoline receipts. For some reason, I unearthed all these utterly useless, random objects that I didn't know I still possessed, like a flattened, stale menthol cigarette, a Post-It with a smiley face scribbled on it, a tiny conch shell from a past beach trip, and half a Tylenol PM (so that's where it was!) When I finally realized that my cell phone was stolen, I could only react one way—

The Scream



The Onslaught of Expletives

All of a sudden, "South Park" seemed like a Christian fellowship program compared to my delirious "monologue" manifesting a heightened case of Tourette's Syndrome. Apparently, it was contagious, as it soon became a group activity, with my friends joining in the verbal onslaught. The foul language from friends was actually comforting. It was their way of showing me they really care, by wishing eternal damnation to the d*ckbag who stole my phone.

Spiritual Reckoning

Suddenly, everyone renews their faith in karma, for actually believing that the sorry ass lowlife will get what he deserves, like getting reincarnated as a one-legged cockroach. People had then become well-versed with snippets of the ten commandments, asking, didn't that pond scum thief ever hear of a talking burning bush that got Moses to tell the people that it's bad to steal?

Then of course, you try to be a better person by telling yourself a hundred times over that it's just a material thing, that you won't take it with you in that place "up there" where there are fluffy clouds and singing cherubs. Actually it's more like, you won't need it much "down there" (and I don't mean Australia) while shuttling back and forth between the nine floors.

Okay, no dice. In this case, I'm a material girl, but with reason.

The Remembrance of Things Past

For someone who has long been contented with any ol' mobile phone, as long as it had a keypad that could text a smiley face, imagine how it was like to receive the latest, state-of-the-art Motorola SLVR (a.k.a. *Ninjakaw Mo To*)! Might as well do a little plugging, even if it's a requiem. Receiving the SLVR was akin to tasting champagne after drinking beer all my life. It was a sleek, black and blade-thin beauty, and more intelligent than I'd ever be.

In fact, my ultra-wired friends had been thankful that this objet d'art had finally fast-tracked my e-volution, especially after being a self-confessed dunce when it came to all matters techie. I quickly e-voled from associating "Bluetooth" with smurfs' dentures, to learning how to download Goldfrapp MP3s into the iTunes database, accessing the Web, sending e-mails, and taking full color videos of my dog frolicking in the garden.

Yet my biggest loss extended beyond the all-too-groovy features. For a sentimental shmuck like me, it's the memories attached to it that caused my delirium. I didn't just lose my net work that I built over the years in my directory (heed my advice people: list down all your contacts on paper!). In the SIM card that disappeared along with the phone, there was stored a private diary of sorts; a collection of old messages (some even over three years) from best friends and past loves, testimonials of great parties, even some random texted notes bearing good vibes that cheered me up when I needed it. I lost the photos I took of awesome Boracay sunsets, the candid shots of friends on happy afternoons, the light-streaked masquerade pieces of my fire-spinning crew on the beach. Now what the hell will all this mean to the

OUT THE WINDOW



Tals Diaz

lowlife bastard who snatched my phone?

Incommunicado

In this cell phone-crazed country, I know many have fallen prey to this terrible techno thievery. As such, I was deluged with sympathetic stories, some consoling me that it's actually a "nice feeling" to be disconnected for a few days.

Man, I really wish I could echo this sentiment, but in the two days that I didn't carry a cell phone, I was extremely fidgety, restless and beside myself with anxiety, wondering whether I had made enemies or lost clients because I

failed to text back. Strangest of all was not intermittently reacting on instinct, like Pavlov's dog, to a beeping sound every few minutes.

The Resurrection

So these days, I am painstakingly reconstructing my directory once again. As expected, once I had reestablished contact with the outside world on a Monday morning, many had wondered if I had fled the country, gotten kidnapped, or had something against DJ Tiesto, simply because I wasn't responding to their text messages.

All this reminds me of those sci-fi stories about how machines had begun to control mankind before they realized it. Methinks it's already happened. In the blink of an eye, we have become enslaved by an inanimate object; a product of technology. You lock up a substantial part of your life in it, and when you lose it, you feel as if you've become a cripple. Is it any wonder at all that it's called a "cell"?



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"THIS event is much more than a fashion exhibit. I want to present inspirations and a universe in harmony with space."

Christian Lacroix at the Ayala Museum?



OH YES.

We kid you not. Thank The Alliance Française de Manille, the French Embassy, the Association Française d'Action Artistique and the Ayala Museum.

For the first time, an art exhibit featuring Christian Lacroix Haute Couture will be presented in the Philippines at the Ayala Museum. The event, which will run from the 1st of April until the 4th of May 2006, will open the French Spring in Manila 2006.

The exhibit, whose curator is Yves Sabourin, went first on display at the Fine Art and Lace Museum of the city of Alençon in France and was then followed by a world tour, which included China, Thailand and now the Philippines, before a final trip to Israel.

As a designer, Lacroix has always been interested in every aspect of art. Moreover, his Haute Couture creations are real pieces of art. In this exhibit, which focuses on 17 years of work by one of France's most outstanding fashion designers, 63 of his unique dresses and accessories will be presented.

"DIALOGUES" is a conversation between designer, artist and viewer.

As Christian Lacroix says, "This event is much more than a fashion exhibit. I want to present inspirations and a universe in harmony with space."

The display intends to communicate to the viewer the inspiration that stimulates Lacroix to continuously rejuvenate and reinvent himself as a designer. The message is that artists, including fashion designers, absorb influences from their environment to react to their surroundings in creating their art. In turn, the viewer of these artistic forms is stimulated and encouraged to view his or her surroundings in a new way.

"This is a display where everything is mixed together, where inspiration and influences are released, where distance allows understanding the creation process," says Mr. Yves Sabourin, curator of the exhibit.

The result is "Dialogues," a conversation between designer, artist and viewer. The sensibilities and perception of each dialogue partner are expanded through this process and the works produced and perceived take on new meanings.

A series of lectures and discussions related to fashion and the influence of French fashion designers will also be held at the Ayala Museum in April.



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Here's a sample:

"A thousand false days whirled before him of how, together, they swam in the rivers and chased the water birds; how she rode on his back as they hunted the torpid fishes; how she told him that she loved him no matter what he looked like, no matter what he was, that she would be pretend to be a diwata enchanted beyond hope by his charming voice."

from "The Maiden and the Crocodile" by Dean Francis Alfaro

"She slid into bed in a rush, half-afraid that a cold hand would grab her ankle if she stood beside her bed too long, but lay awake in the dark listening to the house creak as it cooled and thought about the ghost."

from "The Haunting of Martina Luzuriaga" By Vince Groyon

"The socialite-of-the-moment, who looked like a pretty, middle-aged mestiza in the papers, was frightening in person. She was a giantess who seemed to tower beyond six feet in her teetering heels and had an eyebrow that was perpetually cocked to one side. She approached Clara, her barbaric jewelry banging against her magnificent chest."

from "Girl on a Couch" by Rachelie Medina



2



PINOYS RULE IN SINGAPORE! MTV VJ Coby Miller with VJ Denise Keller, fashion show opener Rocky Salumbides

SINGAPORE FASHION FESTIVAL 2006

Fashionably loud, fashionably late

ONE FOOT AFTER THE other alighting on the red carpet, out sauntered a rag tag bunch—a chic clique that was all abuzz with excitement for the affair to come.

It was hot, literally and figuratively at the Tent @ Ngee Ann City on Singapore's famed Orchard Road as the Lion City celebrated the Singapore Fashion Festival.

Team Philippines was represented by style editors and experts that manifested posh spice. Svelte Preview editor Pauline Juan enters the room in subtly elegant tones, wearing Vivienne Tam day dresses and Robert Clergerie plat-

Tim Yap



forms, with her hair neatly pinned to reveal her classic swan-like features.

If Pauline is a swan, Mega editor Carla Sibal is a flamingo—and a punk one at that. Always turning heads with her now famous 'do and her distinct va-va-voom flair for clothes, Carla is an Asian version of a Barbie doll on Adkins. The retinue was completed by The Star's dandy design duo Ricky Toledo and Chito Vijandre, from the stylish house of Firma, and myself.

Pinoy models shine

Our first stop was the perfect fusion of a catwalk extravaganza mixed with an electrifying live performance, aptly titled "Fashionably Loud." This MTV trademark production has been touring the world, and is on its first hop in Asia. It featured UK rock band Placebo, famous for their androgynous antics and substance infused songs.

FASHIONABLY/D3



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Frolicking at the MTV fashion fest



Fashionably loud, fashionably late

From page D1

"It's music made by outsiders for outsiders," they explained their sound to me and Mega style wiz Patrick Ty, who was with me during the MTV shindig. "We played in bad wigs, cross dressed in the middle of Bible belt in America, pushed boundaries to fight repression. Sometimes you have to allow for the floodgates to open," said Placebo lead singer Malko before their Fashion Festival performance.

And when the fashion floodgates did open, I was late for it. I ended up waiting outside (Singapore super starts on time) for a bit, which made me miss the star that Filipino model Rocky Salumbides caused. Apparently our caramel-skinned fashion import has been making headlines and heads turn on the catwalk. Rocky toppled all the major shows featuring big marquee names like Jean Paul Gaultier, Salvatore Ferragamo, Missoni,

among others.

Another shaved beauty is our very own Ezra Blu Freeland from Cebu, who even in the midst of all the foreign models stands out because of his distinct look and physique. I chit-chatted with the two male models while they were backstage with Lily Cole at the Ferragamo show. I was so proud of them because they would always be the opening and closing of the show. And in fashion terms, that meant absolute star power.

Haute couture and cuisine

We caught the theatrics of the Jean Paul Gaultier gala, the denim possibilities of G-Star, the local designs of Singapore's very own Tang's and the "Piera" collection of leather goods powerhouse Salvatore Ferragamo. The shows started promptly and ended even earlier, with enough time for an after-party and post-event affairs afterwards. At the MTV post party at The Loof, I was pleased to see models Brent Javier and Jon Mullaly doing the rounds of shows in the Lion City. And oh, did I mention that MTV VJ Colby Miller is being mobbed by fans wherever he goes?

In between fashion shows, our favorite guide Wee Tee, showed us Singapore's sunny side up, as we hopped from one hot resto to another. Particularly memorable was the Straits Kitchen at the Hyatt, which featured island buffets from our spicy South East Asian neighbors. Yum!

Since this is a fashion group, we all had our dietary constraints. Pauline's was "no chicken," since she was allergic to it. Carla's was "no carbs," since she's also allergic to it. Ricky and Chito both brought their stash of Xenical, but would always conveniently forget to bring it during meals.

It had to take our good humored Singapore sling Wee Tee to remind us to, "Eat, drink and be merry, because tomorrow... we die!" She would add with a high-pitched giggle. "No restrictions should be your diet rule," she would remind us as we made Orchard Road our longest catwalk, to burn off the calories, of course.

Singapore nights

Our bubbly nights didn't end with the runway shows, after-parties and sponsor's goodie bags. We would trapeze around Sing City's nocturnal treats—from the newly renovated Asian club legend Zouk to cavernous Ministry of Sound (MOS).

MOS is something else. The main floor can house up to 1,100 partyphiles. And that's not counting the other VIP rooms that ranges from a disco themed Studio 54 to a futuristic white washed "Bed Supper Club"-inspired room, even a Sky lounge area for CEOs to wine and dine their clients.

There was even a baroque gold room filled with Philippe Starck furniture that serves as a VIP private room. Hrm, now I know how to solve the issue of having too many VIPs—have a lot of VIP rooms!

Another night spot worth checking out is Batter Factory on Clark Quay. The bar and club features art installations and urban themed murals that celebrate global creativity, something that Singapore makes sure to emphasize with its every venture.

All these reinforce Singapore's determined stance to be at the forefront of the global style stage. They have positioned themselves to be the hub where all other hubs converge. Just for that, they deserve the spotlight in the red carpet.

Jean Paul Gaultier Summer 2006



THE FESTIVAL cost \$2M to organize



THEY replicated JPG's signature theatricality



THE FESTIVAL lasts 10 days

Tang's collection



HELD in the heart of Orchard Road



LOCAL PLAYERS. Sing pride Tang's



TANG'S THEME Secret Garden

Salvatore Ferragamo "Piera" collection



WILD ONE Pinoy model Blu Freeland



SHE SHOT Lily Cole, face of the festival



SALVATORE Jr was in the audience

G Star Raw Denim



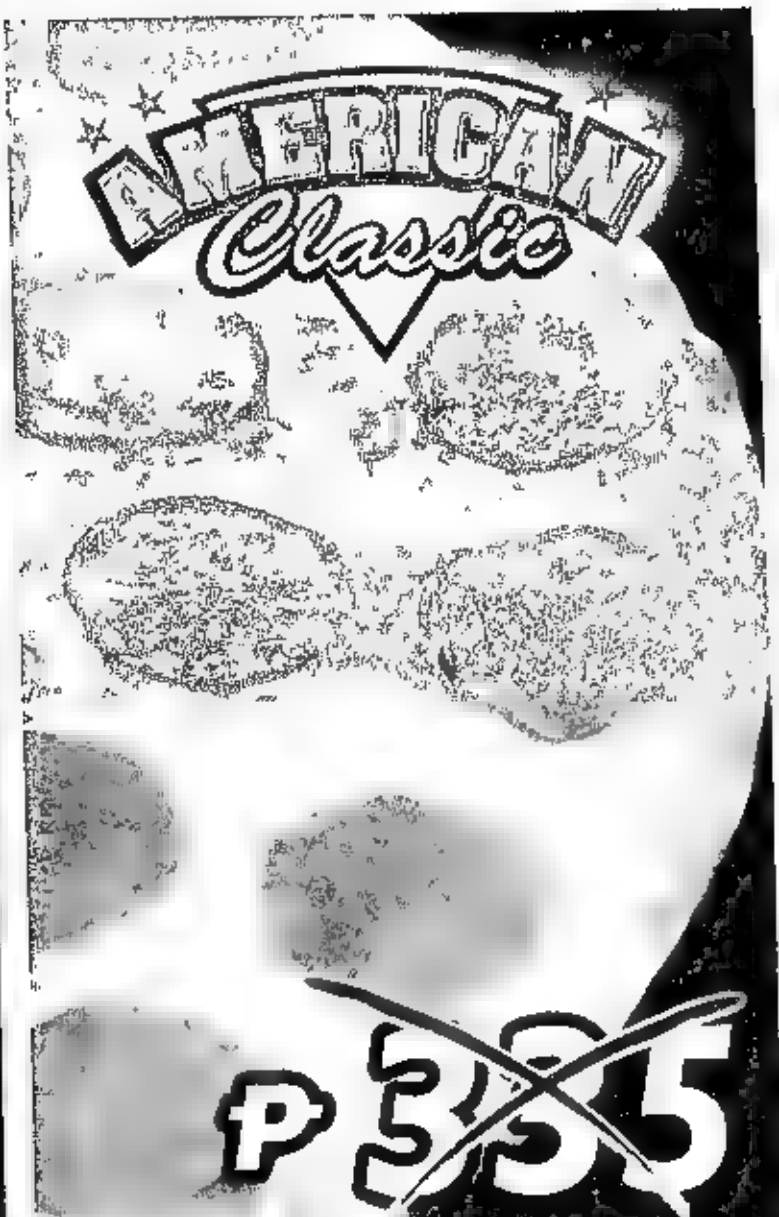
ROCKY is our Asian male supermodel



THE festival has a line up of 30 shows



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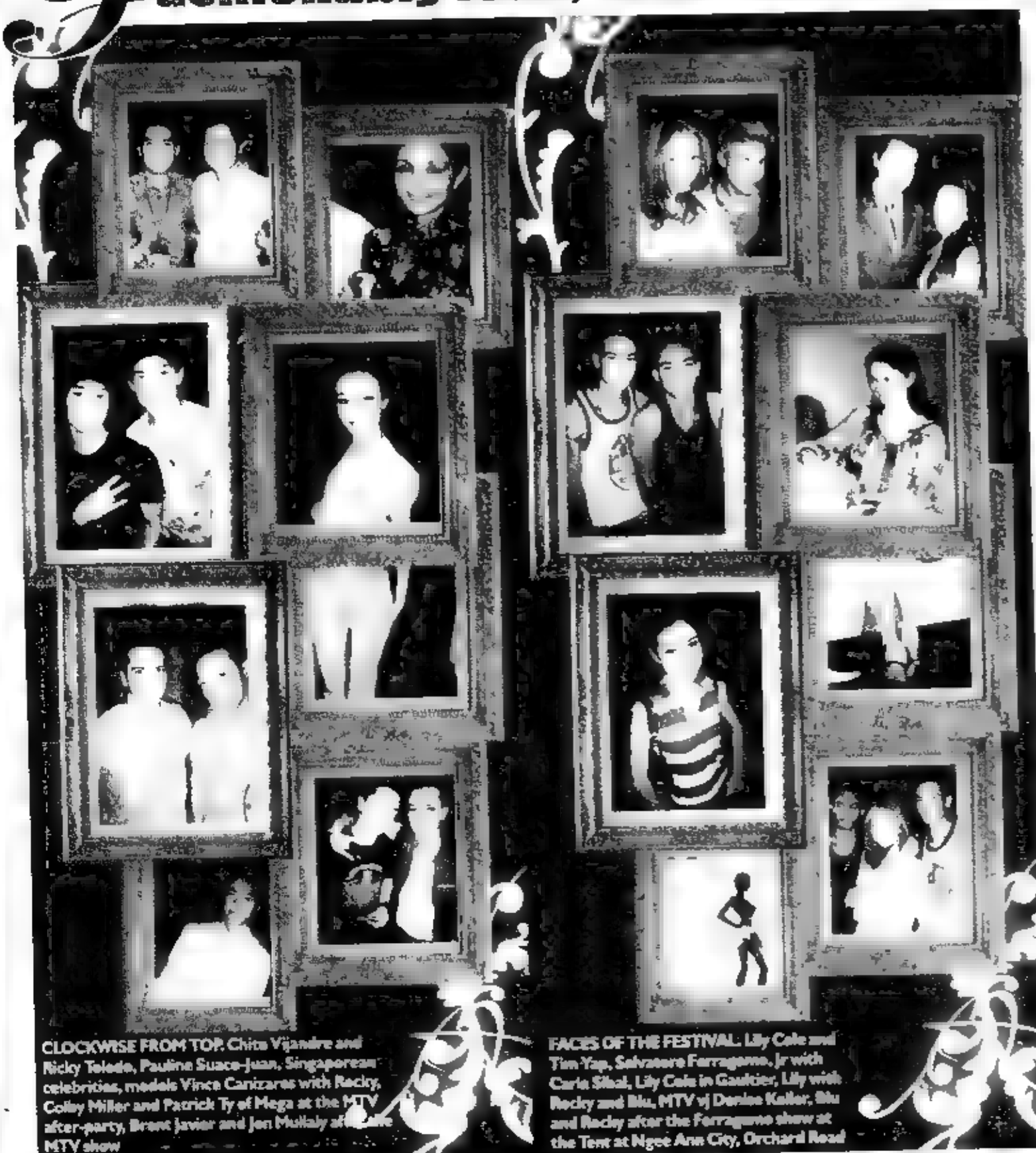
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Fashionably loud, fashionably late



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Chita Viganore and Nicky Telede, Pauline Suave-Juan, Singaporean celebrities, models Vince Canizares with Racky, Colby Miller and Patrick Ty of Mega at the MTV after-party, Brent Javier and Jon Mulaly after the MTV show

FACES OF THE FESTIVAL: Lily Cole and Tim Yap, Salvatore Ferragamo, Jr with Carla Sibal, Lily Cole in Gaultier, Lily with Rocky and Blu, MTV vj Denise Kaller, Blu and Racky after the Ferragamo show at the Tent at Ngee Ann City, Orchard Road



THE FACE OF THE FESTIVAL Lily Cole stops traffic on Orchard Road

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER IN THE history of Singapore, cars stood still for a momentous event in Orchard Road shopping history. No woman has ever done this before, but then again, global supermodel Lily Cole is no ordinary woman.

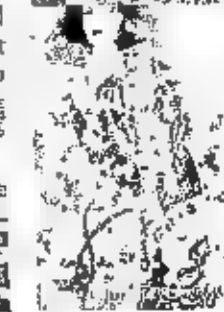
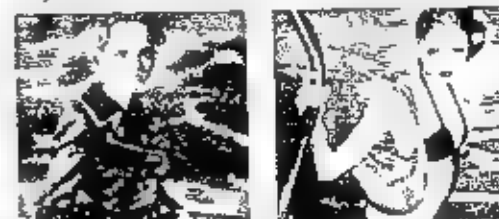
Tagged as "The Face of the Festival 2006," Lily is tipped to be one of the hottest and most in demand girls, who has been described as "a British girl who resembles a maiden in a pre-Raphaelite painting"—her signature look that evokes the freshness and the romance that fashion emanates now.

Super! got the chance to have a little chat a day before her Orchard Road shoot. Backstage during the Ferragamo show, she was pleasantly surprised to know that this writer was from the Philippines. "My best friend in London is Filipina!" she exclaimed.

When asked the cliché questions that puts models under a certain stereotype, she has this to say, "It really is the strange dichotomy with what I do—that's why I study and do other things." A straight-A student in secondary school, she plans to study political science in a British University.

Of course, I asked her opinion on Kate Moss' current predicament. Lily is one of those girls who have been tagged as the "next Kate." "To be even compared to her is the highest compliment. Fashion loves Kate and for sure she will bounce back," she said in a nonchalant tone. "When she did those campaigns, she signed her face, as a model. She didn't sign her life away. She didn't have to."

With a face like that (as you can see from all the campaigns she has done) and a mind like that to boot, it comes as no surprise that Lily Cole could cause heavy traffic. Tim Yap



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By David Milan

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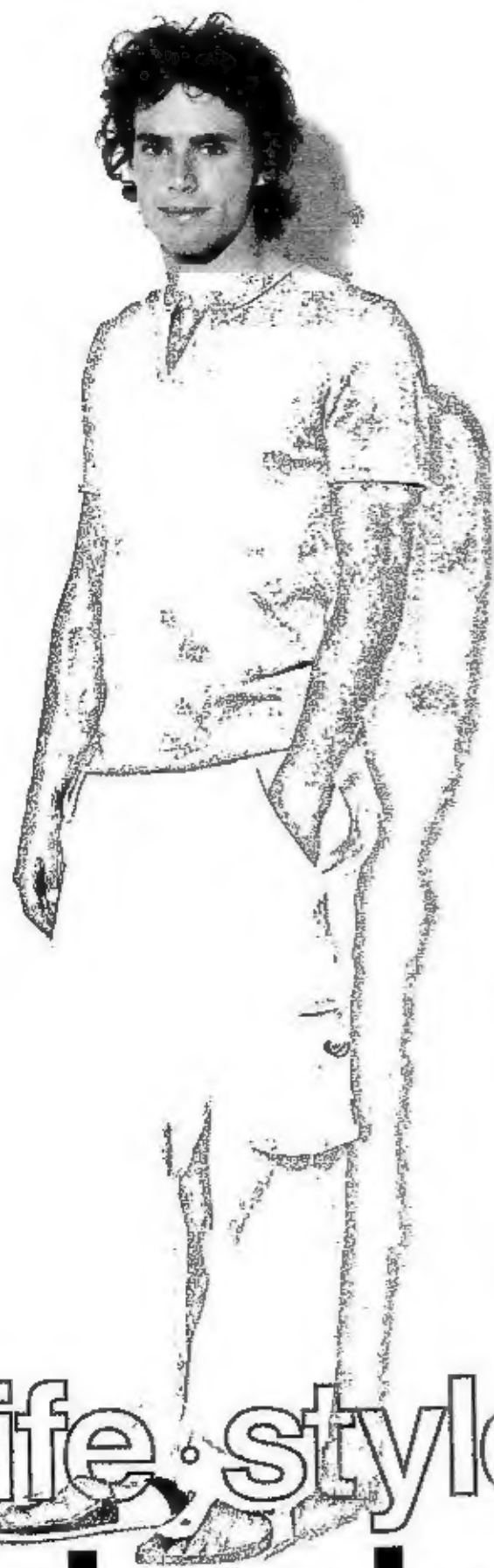
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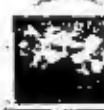
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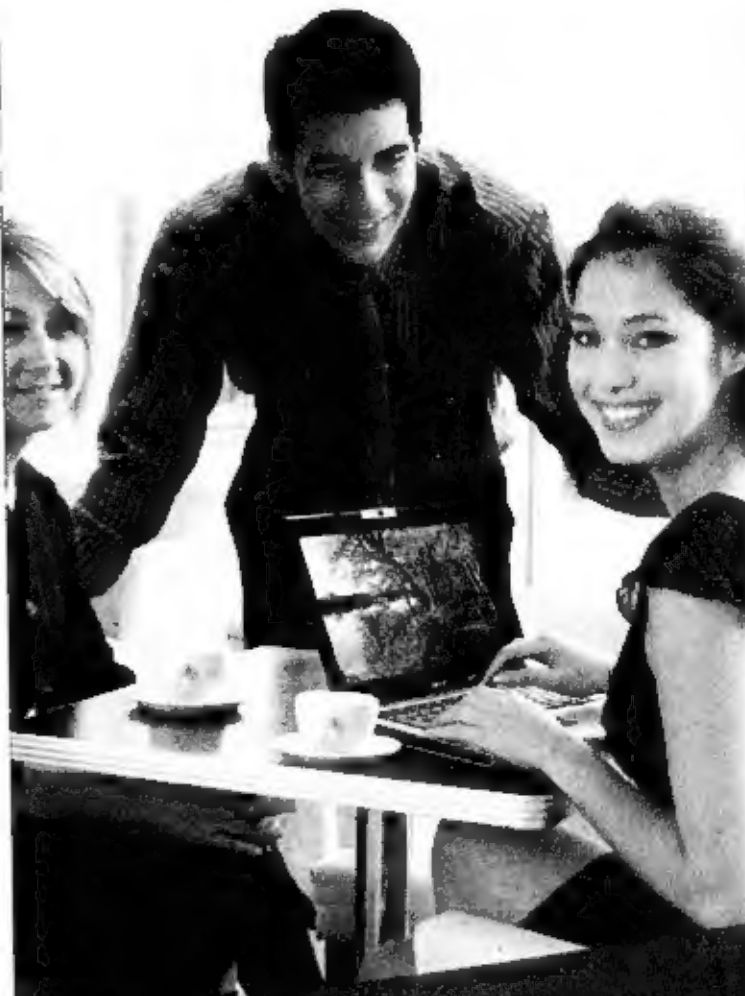
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Thermal Inkjet Printers: The MS-PCB is a thermal inkjet printer. It is a high-quality, high-speed printer that can print in black and white or color. It is a compact, desktop printer that is easy to use and maintain. It is a great choice for home or office use.

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[illegible]



Photos by Mark Nicdao
Clothes by Tru Youth (<http://tru youth.livjournal.com>)

club and play for 2,000 people 'til 4 a.m. in the morning, then going into New York City to Crobar and listening to music 'til 9 a.m.

The soundtrack to my life would include ... Inner City, "Good life"; Queen, "Bohemian Rhapsody"; and NWA, "Express yourself"

If I was invisible for a day, I would ... Go into the bathroom with Victoria Secret model Gisela. :)

The thing that makes me most angry is ... People who have to pretend or be fake.

If I was the most powerful person on earth ... I'd stop the war in the Middle East.

The best thing about family is that ... You can't get rid of them.

When I'm gone, they'll probably say ... He took my favorite CD!

If money was no option ... I'd go into space.

When I retire, I would like ... A high rise condo in the Philippines.

The world would be a much better place
if ... There was no more war.
My hero is ... My mom.
The thing that makes my life worth liv-
ing is ... Not knowing what tomorrow brings.
My greatest hope for the future is ... Mu-
sic.
The worst thing somebody said about
me was ... Your hair is green.
My favorite moments are when ... I'm lis-
tening or writing music.
My most embarrassing moment was
when ... I drank a large glass of vodka instead
of water.
I'm saving up for ... A high rise condo in
the Philippines.
My biggest indulgence is ... Sushi.
My current state of mind is ... Hunger.
If someone would play me in my biopic
it would be ... Adam Sandler HA! HA!
I aspire to be ... Better.

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March 15-April 30, 2006 Glendora, Avalon Center

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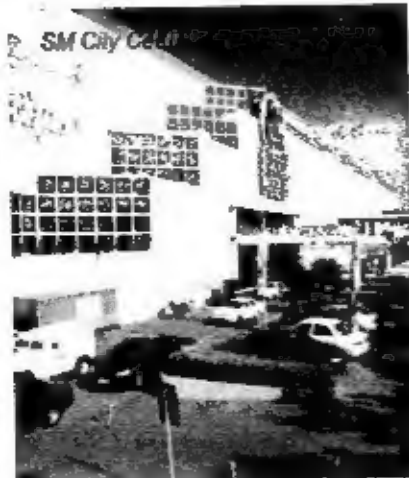
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3 days of exciting finds and big savings at 3 SM malls

SM City Bicutan, SM City Lucena and SM City Cebu will hold their simultaneous 3-DAY SALE on March 31, April 1 and 2.



A wider selection of items are on sale at up to 50% savings! Discounted merchandise include swimwear, sporting goods, and outdoor furniture.



As an added value for shoppers, a raffle event will be held at each of the 3 participating malls.

At stake are a total of 35 units of JVC XA-HD500 DIGITAL AUDIO PLAYERS to be given away to lucky shoppers.

- SM City Bicutan — 10 units
- SM City Lucena — 10 units
- SM City Cebu — 15 units

3-Day Sale shoppers get a chance to join the raffle event with only a P500 purchase at any participating mall establishment.

SM CITY BICUTAN

This SM mall invites southsiders to take advantage of great deals at SM Hypermarket, SM Department Store, and a host of other fun stores and shops.

March 31 and April 1 shopping hours at SM City Bicutan are extended until 11pm

SM CITY LUCENA

Aside from SM Department Store and SM Supermarket, you'll be delighted to discover great bargain buys in almost every corner, including:

- ENY Boutique
- Pale Bleue
- Mandarin Chinese Drug Center
- Patricia Jewels Collection
- Dermstrata Skin Clinic & Spa

COMPUTER VANS AND JEEPNEYS are accessible within the mall vicinity. Many routes are available thru both the old and the new terminals.

- **LIBRENG SAKAY** at selected areas in Lucena City will be provided by SM during the mallwide sale.

SM CITY CEBU

More savings on a wide selection of summer items await you at SM City Cebu.

The daily raffle draws are selected on an hourly basis starting 12nn and ending at 10pm as follows:

- P3,000 SM GIFT CHEQUES (5 draws / 5 winners)
- JVC DIGITAL AUDIO PLAYER (5 draws / 5 winners)

SM Department Store and SM Supermarket also have sale offerings galore!

SM Bowling Center's "Barkada Bowl Treat" promo is ongoing in which a customer may avail of FREE one (1) hour bowling plus meals with Pepsi for only P299.

Offering a variety of specialty food counters, SM Foodcourt is the ideal place to take time out from bargain hunting as you re-charge before you shop some more in the mall.



It's time again for SM Cinema's "One, Two, Three, FREE" promo! Come in groups of 4 and get your movie tickets for the price of 3! Promo valid only during the 3-DAY SALE.

3 day sale
mar 31 - apr 1, 2
mall hours 10am - 10pm
up to 50% OFF
great selections mallwide



On Mar. 31 & Apr. 1
EXTENDED
up to 11 pm BICUTAN only



Per DTI-MCH Permit No. A3-126, Series of 2008

Per DTI-QUEZON Permit No. 033, Series of 2008

Per DTI-CEBU Permit No. 118, Series of 2008